



## GBCA SAFETY TOOLBOX TALK

### COLD AND FLU PREVENTION

Viruses causing the common cold and seasonal flu produce similar symptoms: sore throat, cough, congestion and sneezing, body aches, and fever. The following are tips that may help prevent, or lessen the effects of, the cold or flu:

- **Stay healthy every day:** Eat a healthy diet, exercise, and rest to strengthen your immune system. Compromised immune systems have a hard time fighting off illnesses.
- **Get a flu shot.** The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. The flu vaccine can make your sickness milder if you do still catch the flu. Most pharmacies and family medicine providers continue to give flu shots during flu season.
- **Stay hydrated,** especially if you feel like you're getting sick.
  - Drink electrolyte infused drinks or water to keep your body hydrated.
  - Children's pedia-pops can hydrate the body and can help temporarily reduce a fever.
  - *Diabetics should see a doctor first before using pedia-pops or drinking electrolyte drinks, as some have high levels of sugar.*
- **Wash and clean your hands often,** especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. Viruses spread when we touch surfaces & then our eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - Use plenty of soap & water. Make sure to lather well & scrub for at least 20 seconds.
  - Use hand sanitizer if a hand-washing station is not close-by.
- **Cover your cough or sneeze.** Coughs and sneezes can propel viruses up to 6 feet to surfaces, where they can live for hours. Cover your nose & mouth with a tissue; if a tissue is not available, use your upper arm, never your hands. Put used tissues directly into a waste basket.
- **Prevent the spread of viruses among your family members:** don't share eating utensils, drinking glasses, or towels. Consider using disposables while a family member is sick.

#### **Most important tip: See a healthcare professional when illness strikes!**

- If you are sick, avoid going to work, school, or other public places. It may take longer to recover from colds or the flu if you push yourself. You also risk infecting others.
- Keep in mind that antibiotics are for bacterial infections, not viruses such as the cold or flu.
- When prescribed a medication, take them as prescribed and for the full course. Prescriptions are given to help your body build immunity. Just because you "feel better" does not mean that the medication has finished working.