

## Good Health for the New Year, and All Year

*Acknowledgements: Dr. Marelle Yongue, UL Lafayette Staff Physician  
US Department of Agraculture  
Centers for Disease Control*

Most people start the New Year with good health in mind. Why stop now?

### Good Eating Habits

Now is a great time to review your eating habits, and consider making some changes. The USDA offers a wonderful interactive website that will allow you and your family to learn more about eating healthy, plan healthy meals, track your progress, etc. Log on to:

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

### What is a communicable illness?

Although flu season is not quite here yet, a review on communicable illness is a good idea.

- This describes an illness caused by an infection (viral or bacterial) that can pass from one person to another.
- These infections can vary from being very mild (head cold) to very severe (meningitis).
- The modes of transmissions may include:
  - Direct skin contact (Staphylococcal infection, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea),
  - Respiratory droplets, from coughing or sneezing (head cold, influenza, pneumonia, tuberculosis),
  - Sharing oral / throat secretions (Strep throat, Mono, Meningococcal Disease) or
  - Exposure to infected blood (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C).
- Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day **before** symptoms develop and up to 5 days **after** becoming sick. **That means that you can pass an infection to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.**

### What can you do to prevent communicable illness - Practice good hygiene:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
- Use a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment; and wiping surfaces of equipment before and after use.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands
- Encourage people around you to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Do not put anything in your mouth that has been in someone else's mouth
- Talk to your health care provider concerning any available vaccines that may prevent or decrease the severity of a communicable illness
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.