



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency
Contact Information: Mary Proctor, Community Outreach - 517-437-7395

What: The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency Kicks off “Healthy Habits” Month

Coldwater, Michigan, December 01, 2008 – With the holidays upon us, it is easy to put aside our health as we focus on celebrating the season with family and friends. But the holidays fall in the middle of the annual flu season; close quarters, stress and lack of sleep during this time of year can make us more vulnerable to illness increasing the need to avoid the spread of germs.

“One of the most important steps a person can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others is keeping their hands clean,” said Mary Proctor, Community Outreach Worker. “Adults and children should wash their hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing.”

Hand washing is simple! Just follow these steps:

- Wash with warm water and soap.
- Scrub all surfaces.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds. (the time it takes to sing your ABC’s – to yourself please)
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer.

In addition to hand washing, there are several other good health habits to practice now and throughout the rest of the winter season that can help your body stay healthy and fight off the flu and other illness. We recommend the following:

- Eat a balanced diet including plenty of vegetables, fruits and whole grain products.
- Drink plenty of water and go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol and saturated fat.
- Exercise regularly. Thirty or more minutes of physical activity most days of the week can help boost your immunity.
- Get plenty of rest. Sleep is shown to help your body fight off illness.
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread this way.
- Stay away from people who are sick as much as you can.
- If you get sick, stay home from work or school, if possible.

“At this time of year, sickness and disease are the last things anyone should have to worry about, which is precisely why we can make sure we don’t get sick” said Mary Proctor, Community Outreach Worker.

The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency serves Branch, Hillsdale, and St. Joseph Counties. For information on the services we provide go to our website

www.bhsj.org

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