

the Putnam Valley Health Advisory Council presents . . .

# the HAC Helpline #16

for the Students and Families of the Putnam Valley Central School District

## Cold and Flu Season Reminders

As we ring in the New Year and go back to work and school after a long holiday break, we also return to the heart of the cold and flu season. Prevention is critical at this time of year, but fortunately, it's not difficult. Here are a few tips for you and your family. . .

**Take Care of Yourself.** It sounds obvious, but be extra careful this time of year to:

- ▶ **Drink plenty of water** and other liquids.
- ▶ **Get enough sleep.**
- ▶ **Eat vitamin rich foods.**
- ▶ **Exercise regularly.** If you can't go outside to walk or jog, do yoga or t'ai chi, go swimming or skating, or drive to the mall and power walk.
- ▶ **Socialize. Yes!** New research has shown that people with active social networks are actually healthier than those who are more isolated. Join a book club or art class, go to church or synagogue, attend a PTA meeting.

**Wash Your Hands.** It's not just good hygiene; it's the single most effective way to stop the spread of germs.

**Carry pens.** Cold and flu germs are easily passed through hand-to-hand contact, and writing implements are a culprit. Don't use bank, school, restaurant, medical office, or grocery store pens if you don't have to.

**Grocery carts.** Wearing gloves at the store can cut down on the transfer of germs from carts that everyone uses.

**Use tissues.** Carry them with you and have them ready for coughs and sniffles.

**Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm, not your hands.** While it's clearly best not to cough or sneeze into the air, sneezing or coughing into your hands is not a great alternative either. It just transfers airborne germs from your mouth to your hands, where you will spread them around every time you touch something or someone.

**Telephones.** Use your cell phone when you are out and about. Avoid public phones or phones on other people's desks, which can harbor germs on handsets and dialing areas. Clean your own home phones regularly. You can clean the handset with a cloth and rubbing alcohol; since this is the part of the phone that touches your face, it is important to disinfect it. But be very careful not to pour alcohol directly onto the phone. You can also use pre-moistened disinfectant wipes to clean the handset.

**Keyboard.** Clean your home and/or laptop computer keyboard and mouse regularly, especially if others use it. Check online for tips on what to use and how to do it.

**If you do get sick, see your doctor and stay home until you are feeling better.**  
**Complications from the flu can be severe.**

### *About the PV Health Advisory Council*

For close to 20 years, The Putnam Valley Health Advisory Council has been quietly taking responsibility for improving the health, safety, and well being of the children of the PVCSD, as well as the community at large. This group of teachers, parents, physicians, nurses, law enforcement, administrators and students meets monthly throughout the school year and the summer and sponsors community events and programs aimed at educating and informing the children and parents of Putnam Valley.

For more information, visit [www.pvcsd.org](http://www.pvcsd.org) and click on the Health Advisory Council link.

