



Carla Lejarraga | Smile Dental

## how not to catch a cold

Good oral hygiene will help you avoid the cold and flu bugs this winter.

In a recent documentary exploring how we catch colds and flus, researchers conducted a compelling, revealing and somewhat nauseating experiment. Four people sat at a table, playing cards. Attached to the nose of one person was a device that dripped an invisible dye, at about the same rate as the typically runny nose of someone with the flu.

Well, the dye was invisible under normal light, but under neon light it glowed iridescent blue. The person with the 'runny nose' was given a wad of tissues to dab the drip, and the foursome were left to play cards. After half an hour or so, the researchers stopped the card game, the lights were turned off, and a neon light was turned on. All the cards glowed bright blue, as did the hands, ears, eyes, noses and lips of all of the players!

Most of us think we catch colds and flus by breathing airborne particles – from a cough in the car or a sneeze in the office. However, recent research suggests these viruses are most commonly transmitted by physical contact – as convincingly, cringingly demoed in that doco.

It's around this time of year that colds and flus really make their presence felt. They're easily caught, difficult to treat, and can wipe us out for a week or more at a time. They take a huge toll on workplaces, schools and unis. The average adult suffers around three colds per year, while for kids it's around eight. The only disease more common than the common cold is tooth decay!



The good news is, thorough oral hygiene can help you avoid the latest cold and flu bugs.

Follow these tips to avoid a cold:

- Wash your hands frequently with disinfectant handwash, especially before brushing or flossing.
- Avoid touching your face after contact with someone who has a cold – wash your hands first.
- Don't bite your nails or rub your eyes.
- Germs love damp. Use two toothbrushes – one for morning, one for night – and store them in the open air with the heads up, so they dry thoroughly.
- When you have a cold, disinfect your toothbrushes with antiseptic mouth rinse, then air dry.
- Change your toothbrushes regularly, especially after a cold.
- Don't share toothbrushes or allow them to touch.
- If you use a mouthguard, splint, denture or orthodontic appliance, disinfect it with antiseptic mouth rinse every few days.
- Stick out your tongue and say ahhh then clean your tongue with a tongue scraper or toothbrush.

Oh, and you could bury your nose in DUO, just in case!

Keep smiling ; )

**Material supplied by Carla Lejarraga, leader of the hygiene department at Smile Dental. [www.smiledental.com.au](http://www.smiledental.com.au)**