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## **GLENDALE FIRE PROMOTING FLU PREVENTION: IT IS NATIONAL HAND WASHING AWARENESS WEEK**

**Glendale, Ariz.** — During flu season, paramedics from the Glendale Fire Department often receive calls to provide medical assistance to people with severe flu symptoms. By the time fire crews arrive, the patient usually needs to go to the emergency room. In many cases, healthy habits may have prevented that trip to the hospital.

This time of year, with the season associated with sickness upon us, firefighters take extra precautions with illness-prevention. Hand sanitizer, vitamins, and disinfectant wipes are some of the more common paths all of us should take in an attempt to avoid getting “the bug.” But which method is the best? The Answer: Wash your hands!

Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent illness. Proper hand washing will not only help prevent infectious illnesses like the flu or common cold, but it will also help prevent contracting or passing along diseases like E-coli, Meningitis and Hepatitis A. Considering 80% of all communicable diseases are spread by touch, hand washing should be at the top of everyone’s daily to-do-list.

In honor of National Hand Washing Awareness Week, which runs December 2 - 8, the Glendale Fire Department offers the following suggestions on how to properly wash your hands:

- Wet your hands with warm water, not hot water.
- Use any type of soap.
- After lathering hands completely, focus on the fingertips, underneath the fingernails, in between fingers and the palms of your hands.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends washing your hands for 15 seconds (the amount of time it takes to sing yourself Happy Birthday) but 30 seconds is ideal.
- Rinse hands thoroughly under running water. Never use a basin or container to rinse hands.
- Only dry hands with a clean, dry towel, preferably disposable towels.
- After washing your hands, turn the faucet off while holding a clean paper towel, not your clean, bare hand.

For more information about the flu and prevention tips, visit the Arizona Department of Health Services website at [www.azdhs.gov](http://www.azdhs.gov) or the CDC at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

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