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Here's to your HOLIDAY HEALTH

During the bustling holiday season, we jam-pack shopping, parties, drinking, eating and more parties into our maxed-out schedules. And in return for this glutinous fun, we sacrifice precious sleep -- and in turn, our health. Now that the dreaded **swine flu** is making headlines more than ever, we've got to be extra careful to safe guard our immune systems as the temperature tumbles and the frivolity escalates.



Follow these holiday party health tips -- whether you're hosting or dropping in -- to make sure that you don't spend the season in your nappy pajamas alone in your bed while your friends are debuting their flirty holiday dresses and **toasting to good health**.

For the Party Goer



Remember how Mom always told you to **wear a coat** to prevent catching cold? Well she was right, because staying warm can actually help prevent infection. Pick a warm one that'll serve to accentuate -- not deter -- from your festive holiday look. And girl, wear it everywhere, no matter how cute your dress is! A little mystery and a whole lot of down feathering are doctor's orders.

Remember when you'd get sick on the coolest day of the school year and you had to stay home and you felt like life wouldn't go on? Or maybe you don't remember it because it really wasn't that big of a deal. Same thing now: if you feel feverish or experience any other flu symptoms, **STAY HOME**. ("Maybe a drink will help" is a myth, people!) Trust us, being a regretful no-show rather than attending and spreading your virus is the much more respectful option. Your fellow party-goers will thank you in the morning when they wake up with a slight hangover instead of some nagging, suspicious cough.

It caused trouble for George Castanza and it will for you too: **Don't double dip!** It's definitely a huge no no during this high risk flu season. So, avoid communal bowls of pretzels and chips that don't have serving tongs, and if you want some dip, put a little on a plate just for you. (You'll eat less anyway).



A kiss under the mistletoe or a drunken hook-up with a hot guy may seem, um romantic, but this season, it's **better un-smooched than out of commission for weeks**. Besides the obvious risks, a kiss is the easiest way to spread germs...so if you are going to risk it, make sure he's a solid enough guy to bring you chicken soup!

For the Gracious Hostess



Try to **serve individual portions** of hors d'oeuvres in small containers like shot glasses or small take-out style boxes. And make sure there is plenty of serving-ware so guests hopefully won't use their hands in the nut dish.

Place bottles of **hand sanitizer** in the restrooms or discreetly in the kitchen so guests can quickly cleanse. Recent studies show that hand sanitizer (especially those with alcohol) are more effective than hand washing. We love eco-friendly, fresh-smelling **Fraiss** or the good ol' **standard hand sanitizer** standby.

Offer cute **wine glass charms** to guests so they can easily identify their glasses when set down. Beer drinker? Mark your bottle with a **Beer band**.

Tactfully remind friends who are sick that you **prefer if they stay home** if they're not feeling well -- that's your right as a hostess. No one wants to be known as the host of the party that began an epidemic in your circle of friends!



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