



GREEN MATTERS

HOW DOES WEATHER EFFECT FLU SEASON?

Flu season is here and can vary from season to season but seems to peak in the US between December and February. It has been known to begin as early as October and extend as late as May.¹



What is it about the winter time and cooler temperatures that this virus seems to thrive in? Researchers don't know exactly why, but they do have some theories. When it is cold and dry, this helps the flu virus to survive longer because the droplet particles take longer to evaporate and remain airborne for a longer time, which in turns allows more chances for people to catch it and get sick.⁹ . Another possible theory is that the colder weather forces people to stay indoors more, thus keeping people closer to together increasing transmission. "Not only do you see temperature changes and humidity changes [in winter], you also see changes in people's social interactions," said Dr. Bruce Lee, an associate professor at the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health. He also said that it is hard to determine which factors aid in the flu's prominent presence in the winter time.¹⁰

Get a flu vaccine. The CDC says this is the most important step to take in the prevention of getting the flu virus. Although there are different strands of the flu, the vaccines protect you from at least 3-4 different types of the flu virus that are the most common. It is recommended to get a flu shot from the age of 6 months and older as soon as the vaccines become available for the season. The elderly and infants are at high risk for the flu, so it is important to have caretakers of infants who are too young for vaccinations, be vaccinated as well.¹

Flu Mist or Flu Shot? According to Gregory Poland, a professor at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota and an adviser to the CDC, different age groups get better protection from different types of vaccines. The mist seems to work better for kids in the age range of 2-8. It is not recommended for kids with asthma. "The CDC says that FluMist can reduce flu infections by up to 92%." The injections seem more effective in adults between the ages of 18-49, but can be given in the age range of 2-49. The shot is also given to children 6 months and older. Adults over 65 don't respond well to flu vaccines due to a weakened immune system.¹¹

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UPCOMING TRAINING

- Jan. 14- 1st QTR-Cross Functional Team Meeting, 1300-1430. DPW Conf. room, Bldg 14600
- Jan. 15 - SPCC Training, 0900-1300, Bldg 11307
- Feb. 4 - Hazardous Waste Refresher, 0830;0945, Bldg 11307
- Feb. 11-12 Hazardous Waste Management Course, 0800-1600, Bldg 11307
- Feb. 18- Storm Water Industrial Training, 0900-1300, Bldg 11307
- Mar. 12- Hazardous Waste Refresher, 0830;0945, Bldg 11307

Cold and Flu Prevention at the Work Place

- ◇ Wash hands thoroughly and keep hand sanitizer handy. Work place sites of contaminations include door knobs, handles to appliances in the break room, other people's keyboards and phones, coffee pot handle, countertops, books and other shared office materials.
- ◇ After you wash, use a paper towel to turn the faucet off. Also use a paper towel to open the bathroom door.
- ◇ Avoid touching your eyes, face or rubbing your nose.
- ◇ Get plenty of fresh air, and maintain a healthy diet and exercise.
- ◇ Avoid those that are sick with the flu or cold.²



Look Before You Leap...Winter Fire Hazards

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The months of December, January, and February are when half of all home heating fires happen. Not only do they start from heating sources this time of year, but also from holiday decorations, candles, and holiday cooking. ⁶

The “Chilling” Facts-(averages taken between 2007-2011)

Heating

- ◇ Space heaters account for 33% of home heating fires, and 81% of home heating deaths based on averages between 2007-2011 according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).
- ◇ Chimneys— 28% of home fires were the result of not cleaning and properly maintaining chimneys.
- ◇ Placing items too close to heat sources (such as clothing, mattresses, bedding, furniture, etc) has accounted for 53% of home heating fire deaths.⁶



Candles

- ◇ According to the NFPA “U.S. fire departments responded to an average of 10,630 home structure fires that were started by candles per year. These fires caused an annual average of 115 civilian fire deaths, 903 civilian fire injuries, and \$418 million in direct property damage.”⁶

Cooking

- ◇ Cooking fires accounted for an “average of 400 civilian deaths, 5,080 reported civilian fire injuries, and \$853 million in direct property damage per year.”⁶
- ◇ Frying food poses the greatest risk of a fire.⁶



Fire Prevention Tips

- Have your furnace inspected and serviced every year.
- Have your chimneys and vents cleaned and inspected once a year.
- Use a fireplace metal screen heat tempered glass to prevent sparks from flying out into rooms.
- Keep children at least 3 feet away from heating equipment (wood stove, fireplace, space heaters).
- Use space heaters with an automatic shut-off.
- Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms monthly.
- Never leave candles unattended! Blow them out when you leave a room. Don't use them in bedrooms where people may fall asleep.
- Put 12 inches of space between candles and anything flammable.
- When cooking, don't leave stove unattended.
- Get rid of live Christmas trees after Christmas or when it's dried out.
- Make sure lights have no broken bulbs or damaged lines.

To idle or not to idle?



On these cold winter mornings before we head off to work or school, one common practice is to crank the car up for a few minutes, get the juices flowing and make it nice and warm before we depart. Is this a good idea? Does it really make a difference or is it unnecessary, wasteful and harmful to the environment. Let's take a look at some of the facts and myths about this "idling" practice.

1. Circulating the engine oil is the only legitimate reason to idle your car. This only takes 10-30 seconds. Letting it idle longer than that is NOT beneficial. Your car will warm up faster as it is gently driven.
2. Idling your engine for long periods of times can harm the engine. Electronic fuel injections send more fuel to the system when it is cold, thus wasting fuel during the warm up process. This can lead to fuel residue build up in your engine which over time can make your engine less efficient .
3. It's just plain bad for our health and the environment. The exhaust is bad for your health. Cars parked along curbs idling force bystanders to inhale the toxic fumes. Idling can be deadly if done in a garage, allowing carbon monoxide to seep into the home. According to the Environmental Defense Fund(EDF), if your are idling for more than 10 seconds you should turn the engine off. "After about 10 seconds, you waste more money running the engine than restarting it", according to Andy Darrell, deputy director of the EDF Energy Program.
4. There are always extenuating circumstances where letting your car "warm up" is necessary especially in freezing temperatures where ice might be on the windshield. ^{3,4,5}



More Reasons NOT to Idle

1. Americans on average spend 16 minutes a day idling their vehicles. The gas spent idling could sustain you 24 miles out.
2. Idling is against the law in some states. (Note that Ft. Gordon has its own "No Idle Policy" as well.)⁷
3. If you're not in traffic and you're idling more than 10 seconds, it is more fuel efficient to shut the engine off and restart it, plus less air pollution.
4. Last but not least, you save money!⁸





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Sources:

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- 2-http://www.simmons.edu/hygieneandhealth/docs/Microsoft_Word_-_Tips_for_Preventing_Cold_and_Flu_in_the_Workplace.pdf
- 3-<http://www.thesilverlining.com/westbendcares/blog/bid/170167/Are-there-any-benefits-to-warming-up-my-car->
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- 5-<http://www.motherearthnews.com/green-transportation/warming-up-your-car-zb0z1205zmat.aspx#axzz3KrPaKXzP>
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Compliance Corner

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Things to Know



- **Asbestos/Lead Awareness!** Before disturbing any building surface you must submit a DA form 4283 to DPW work order desk.
- **Storm drains-** Storm drains are for stormwater. Remember to wash your vehicles at one of the approved wash facilities on post. Remember not to put anything but water down a storm drain.
- The CSRA has made a lot of progress in reducing ozone and particulates so we are **no longer** in danger of becoming a *nonattainment* area (*an area considered to have air quality worse than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as defined in the Clean Air Act of 1970{P.L.91-604,Sec. 109}*).

