

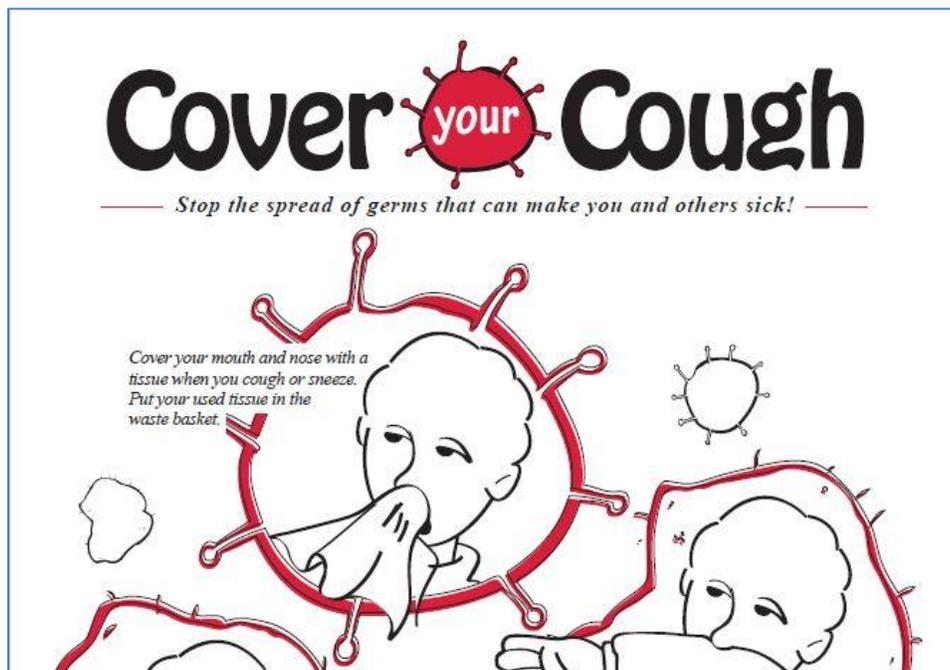
## Germ Prevention: Don't Regift Germs This Holiday Season

By the Water Quality & Health Council

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***In a nutshell...** Holiday gatherings are prime locations for “re-gifting” germs. A free, downloadable Cover Your Cough coloring page from the CDC illustrates strategies to prevent the spread of germs. Children may color the germ prevention page and learn to cover coughs and sneezes and to wash their hands correctly. This article provides directions for mixing a “flu germ-busting” solution of chlorine bleach for treating frequently touched surfaces.*

As you gather with family and friends to mark the holidays, beware the coughing, sneezing person who should have stayed home. This person is a re-gifter, not of an unappetizing fruit cake, but of germs that can hardly wait to make you sick.



[View/download full CDC Cover Your Cough coloring page](#)

Germs survive by re-gifting, propelled by guest “A” through the air in an uncovered cough to be inhaled by guest “B” in her next breath. Now “B” is infected and soon will be culturing her own army of germs to be re-gifted by coughing and sneezing.

The downloadable Cover Your Cough coloring page (left), based on messages from the [US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), offers

practical germ prevention tips. It reminds everyone to cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue or by blocking the cough with their sleeve. These responses to coughing and sneezing are preferable to using *hands* to cover a cough. After all, it is our hands that reach into the bowl of chips and touch all the serving spoons in the buffet line.

Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces such as door knobs and hand rails with a simple chlorine bleach solution goes a long way to blocking the spread of germs from surfaces to hands. And speaking of hands, hand-washing is still the single most important strategy we have for preventing the spread of germs. Healthy germ prevention habits are best instilled at a young age. Help raise a new generation of children who act to prevent germ re-gifting! Download the poster to give to the children in your life for coloring... and education.

*How to Mix a Flu Germ-Busting Bleach Solution for Frequently Touched Surfaces*

*¼ cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water or 1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 quart of water*

- 1. Clean surface with detergent and water.*
- 2. Sanitize using the bleach solution.*
- 3. Let air dry.*

*Bleach solutions lose strength over time. Make new solutions daily. Mix bleach only with water.*

*Healthy Holidays to You and Yours!*

[www.waterandhealth.org](http://www.waterandhealth.org)