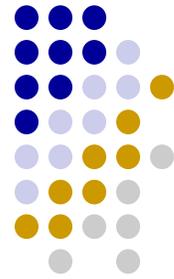


Infection Control At Home



The Comforts of Home...

Returning home after a stay in the hospital can be just the breath of fresh air you need. However, there are some things to keep in mind to keep you, your family, and caregivers safe, healthy, and infection-free.



Infections can be caused by bacteria or viruses, and sometimes fungus. Certain types of bacterial infections are resistant to common antibiotics, and need special treatment and attention to avoid spreading them around.



Many infections can be passed on by sharing commonly used items like wash cloths and towels, and even drinking glasses. It's important that you have your own set of personal items just for you.



Keeping open wounds covered will protect not only you, but your family and friends from infections.

Practicing respiratory etiquette can also protect your entire household from infections. Make sure you cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Always wash your hands thoroughly afterward!

These practices are great prevention not only at home, but at work, the doctor's office, restaurants, and many other places outside the home. You can help by encouraging others to cover their coughs as well!



What Can We Do?

If you have an infection caused by a bug that's resistant to antibiotics, or nearly any other sort of germ, there are steps you can take to keep the germs from spreading.

The first step is reminding the entire household to practice good hand hygiene. Washing your hands with soap and water is the first line of defense against any germ—bacteria, virus, or fungus.

It is a good idea to keep hand sanitizer around the house as well. Make sure the bottle says it's at least 70% alcohol! Hand sanitizer is good for a quick clean, but re-

member to always use soap and water to wash hands that are visibly dirty.

Many people carry germs around with them without



being actively infected. This is called **colonization**, and it could transition to infection if good prevention practices are not in place.

For more tips and tools to prevent the spread of germs and infection, please flip this page over.



For more information about infection prevention and antibiotic resistance, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/>

Or the APIC website:

<http://www.apic.org/>

Questions? We're happy to help!

Contact us:

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Infection Prevention Tips...

Do Not Share...

These items are excellent vehicles for germs. Make sure you do not share:

- Razors
- Toothbrushes
- Enema equipment
- Drinking glasses
- Combs and hairbrushes
- Towels and washcloths
- Forks, spoons, knives, or cups during meals
- Any medical supplies



Contaminated Wastes

Before you begin, put on disposable gloves!

- Place all sharps into a puncture resistant container (an empty bleach bottle or laundry detergent bottle will work):

- Needles
- Razor blades
- Broken glass
- Lancets

•Never recap a needle!

- Learn local rules for waste disposal: Contact your local health or sanitation department.

- Place contaminated wastes in a plastic bag, and close tightly:

- Dressings
- Sanitary or incontinence pads
- Diapers
- Gloves used in patient care

- Flush liquid and semi-liquid substances down the toilet:

- Blood
- Vomit
- Used facial tissues
- Urine
- Feces

Household Cleaning

Be sure to always wear utility gloves when cleaning, and wash your hands after taking them off!

- Clean tubs, sinks, showers, and countertops with a standard household cleaning product.
- Clean toilets with a standard household cleaning product.
- Mop floors at least once a week with a standard floor cleaner. Pour mop water down the toilet, not the sink.
- Clean the inside of the refrigerator weekly with a standard household cleaning product.

Laundry

If laundry is visibly soiled:

- Put on disposable gloves, and dispose of any body substances. Flush liquid and semi-liquid substances down the toilet.
- Don't shake soiled linens!
- If fabrics are severely soiled, presoak them in a standard laundry detergent. Dispose of presoaking water down the toilet.
- Wash clothes, linens, and/or towels that have been visibly soiled separately from the rest of the household's laundry.



Remember to wash your hands with soap and water before and after you perform any medical task, such as giving medication, changing a dressing, or helping someone take a bath or shower or use the toilet. Wash your hands each time before you put on, and after you take off disposable gloves. Good hand hygiene is the number one way to prevent the spread of infection in your home and in your community. Never touch any body substance with your bare hands—but if it should happen, always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.