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Four Things You Can Do To Prevent Infection

Avoiding contagious diseases like the common cold, strep throat, and the flu is important to everyone. Here are four easy things you can do to fight the spread of infection.

1.



Clean your hands.

- Use soap and warm water. Rub your hands really well for at least 15 seconds.
- Or, if your hands do not look dirty, clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Rub the sanitizer all over your hands, especially under your nails and between your fingers, until your hands are dry.
- Clean your hands before touching or eating food. Clean them after you use the bathroom, take out the trash, change a diaper, visit someone who is ill, or play with a pet.

2.



Make sure health care providers clean their hands and wear gloves.

- Doctors, nurses, dentists and other health care providers come into contact with lots of bacteria and viruses. So before they treat you, ask them if they've cleaned their hands.
- Health care providers should wear clean gloves when they perform tasks such as taking throat cultures, pulling teeth, taking blood, touching wounds or body fluids, and examining your private parts. Don't be afraid to gently remind them to wear gloves.

3.



Cover your mouth and nose.

- Many diseases are spread through sneezes and coughs. When you sneeze or cough, the germs can travel 3 feet or more! Cover your mouth and nose to prevent the spread of infection to others.
- Use a tissue! Keep tissues handy at home, at work and in your pocket. Be sure to throw away used tissues and then clean your hands.
 - If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the bend of your elbow or hands. If you use your hands, wash them right away.

4.



If you are sick, avoid close contact.

- If you are sick, stay away from other people. Stay home if you have a fever. Call work or school and tell them you are sick.
- When you go for medical treatment, call ahead and ask if there's anything you can do to avoid infecting people in the waiting room.

These steps can help prevent the spread of colds, the flu*, and diseases like

- Pneumonia*
- SARS
- Tuberculosis
- Mumps*
- Rubella* (also known as German measles)
- Whooping cough*
- Chicken pox*
- Strep throat
- Measles*

*Remember to get a shot to prevent this disease or infection.