

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS”

Controlling Infection

Does Your Home Get a “C” for *Cleanish*?

Controlling the spread of infectious germs around the house doesn't have to be an overwhelming task. Following some simple rules can drastically cut the chance of illness:

Prevent cross-contamination.

Use a different implement (broom, mop, sponges) for each cleaning task in the kitchen and bathroom.

Disinfect cutting boards after each use. And use separate cutting boards: One for vegetables and fruits, and one exclusively for meats. Or, mark each side of one board: One side for vegetables and fruits, the other side for raw meats.

Replace sponges frequently.

Sponges and scrubbers provide the warm, moist conditions and trapped food particles on which bacteria thrive. Bacteria multiply rapidly, increasing from a few to millions in a matter of hours. Between uses, clean sponges with an antibacterial cleaning product and let air dry or microwave a *wet*, not dry, sponge for two minutes.

Empty the vacuum. Dangerous organisms, such as *Salmonella*, could be multiplying in the vacuum cleaner bag, waiting to be released into the air every time you vacuum. Bagless vacs should be emptied after every use. For vacs with collection bags, empty at least monthly.

Disinfect the garbage can.

Germs that grow in your garbage can don't always stay there. It's common

for plastic liners to leak, allowing waste to collect in the bottom of the can or bin. Then, when someone empties the container and sets the bag on the floor, counter, or chair, bacteria spread to that surface, as well as to his or her hands. Clean and disinfect the garbage can weekly, and use antibacterial bags.

Clean the can opener. That little bit of juice or food left on the blade after you open a can invites bacterial growth.

Change the towels. The average person sheds 1 million skin cells an hour. Bath towels harbor those cells and their bacteria, and can serve as a terry-cloth Petrie dish if they're folded and left in a damp bathroom. Hang towels unfolded to let them air dry, and replace them with clean towels after three uses.



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Protect your toothbrush. Every time an open toilet is flushed, a fine mist of fecal matter and bacteria sprays 20 feet in the air. Keep your toothbrush in a drawer or cabinet. You should also sanitize your

toothbrush daily by rinsing it with peroxide or mouthwash. Even though the germs on your toothbrush are your own, but they can multiply to enormous numbers between uses.

Source: <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com>; Centers for Disease Control

Clean Hands Are Healthy Hands

Wash your hands. It's the single *most important way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases*. We all should know the importance of washing after using the toilet, yet less than 50 percent of people actually do it—and almost no one does it properly.

Wash your hands frequently. Always after toileting, after handling raw foods, whenever you've been in contact with anything or anyone "suspicious," and periodically throughout the day. Our bodies naturally carry on them germs. Most of these germs are harmless, and some are even essential to our health! However, germs from other sources, such as raw meat, can also survive on hands, and these can be easily transferred to other surfaces, increasing the risk of cross-contamination. Because our hands are in frequent contact with our eyes, nose, and mouth, it's easy to see how dirty hands spread germs and illnesses, everything from the common cold, to the flu, to food poisoning.

Wash for 20 to 45 seconds—about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" through twice. Rub hands together vigorously and scrub between fingers and under nails. It's even a good idea to lather, rinse, and repeat.

As important as it is to properly wash your hands, it's equally important to **dry them correctly** too. The bacteria and viruses that are left on your hands after even a good washing thrive on moist skin, so until you dry your hands thoroughly after each wash, you can't prevent germs from spreading.

Hot-air hand dryers aren't necessarily the best way to dry hands, primarily because most people give up before their hands are really dry. Wiping your still-damp hands on your clothes is a no-no! Researchers found that the most effective way of reducing hand-borne bacteria is to dry thoroughly washed hands on clean paper towels.

Hand sanitizer gels can be used to kill germs, but they should *not replace* hand washing. Hand sanitizers can build up on skin, so wash your hands the regular way—with soap and warm water—after every fourth use.

Source: WebMD; Centers for Disease Control



Taking Care of Yourself—Happy Holidays Without the Stress

Making a list... Make lists of things that **must** be done, and secondary lists of things you would like to accomplish if possible. Be sure to set strict limits for yourself and others of what you can and cannot do.

Don't wait for friends and family to ask what they can do to help. Instead, make a list and ask everyone to pick those tasks they feel comfortable with. In addition to your long list of caregiving chores, add shopping, baking, or whatever you need extra help with.

Stick to a schedule. Keep your elderly loved one on a regular schedule. It is difficult for someone who is older or ill to adjust to more hectic holiday activities.

Take walks. Make sure your loved one and you get regular exercise.

Limit the bubbly. Be careful about the amount of alcohol you drink.

Stay on your meds. It's easy to forget to take your pills when the house is full of guests and activities, so set up a system to remind you when you need to take your medications.

There's no place like home for the holidays. Don't feel guilty for picking and choosing which holiday gatherings you and your loved one can attend.



Source: www.caring.com; www.agingcare.com

Live Life Laughing!



Inspiration

Worry looks around,
Sorry looks back,
Faith looks up.

Holiday Visits

If a loved one with Alzheimer's lives in a nursing home or assisted-living facility, and you'd like him or her to spend some holiday time with you at home, test the waters first with a short visit before the actual holiday bustle starts. Being removed from familiar surroundings can be disorienting and upsetting.

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To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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Handling Soiled Laundry

As a caregiver you are around a lot of soiled laundry. So make it safe by:

- Always use latex gloves when handling soiled laundry.
- Carry dirty linens away from your body.
- Never shake soiled linens. (Germs may contaminate the floor and be spread throughout the house on the soles of shoes.)
- Use a leak-proof plastic bag, tied shut, for linen that contains body fluids or waste.
- Bag soiled laundry in the same place where it is used.
- Wash soiled linen separately from other clothes.
- Fill the machine with hot water, add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bleach and detergent, rinse twice, and then dry.
- Clean the washer by running it through a cycle with one-cup bleach or other disinfectant.



Remember, *wash your hands* before going on to another task!

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“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

When caring for an elderly person or someone with weakened immunity, it is especially important to follow rules for good hygiene. Read the issue and answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Controlling the spread of infectious germs in the house can drastically cut the chance of illness.
T F
2. Cross-contamination happens when the same sponge is used for the kitchen and bathroom.
T F
3. Bath towels don't hide bacteria because our bodies are clean when we use them.
T F
4. Correct hand washing is the single *most important* way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.
T F
5. Because our hands are in frequent contact with our eyes, nose, and mouth, dirty hands spread germs and illnesses.
T F
6. It doesn't matter how hands are dried after hand washing.
T F
7. Keeping to a regular schedule is important for an elderly person.
T F
8. Dirty linens should be carried away from the body.
T F
9. Gel hand sanitizers can replace hand washing.
T F
10. Germs from raw meat can survive on hands and be transferred to other surfaces.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____