



Avoiding Infectious Diseases

Primary Modes of Transmission

Direct contact

- Person to person by touching, coughing or sneezing, kissing, blood or fluid exchange.
- Animal to person through bites or scratches or handling animal waste.
- Mother to unborn child through the placenta or vagina during birth.

Indirect contact

Germs can stay on an inanimate object, such as a tabletop, doorknob or faucet handle. When you touch an object handled by someone ill with the flu or a cold, for example, you can pick up the germs he or she left behind. If you then touch your eyes, mouth or nose before washing your hands, you may become infected.

Insect bites

Some germs rely on insect carriers, such as mosquitoes, fleas, lice or ticks.

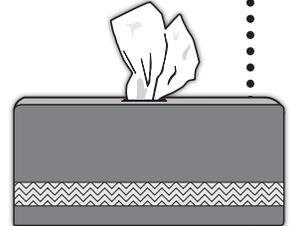
Food and water contamination

Diseases can be transmitted by contaminated water and undercooked food. Usually, these diseases are carried by bacteria and parasites and can be prevented by disinfecting/treating the water or safely handling and fully cooking meat.

Prevention of Infectious Disease

Direct and Indirect

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay away from others when you are sick.



Stay home when you are sick.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Cough and sneeze into your bent arm at the inner elbow.

Wash your hands often.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if washing is not possible.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. This will prevent germs from entering after someone has coughed, sneezed, or spoken.

Make sure you are up-to-date on your immunizations.

Vaccines prevent serious diseases such as meningitis, pertussis (whooping cough), human papillomavirus (HPV), and the flu. Talk to your parents and health care provider to make sure you are up-to-date on all of the vaccines you are recommended to receive. Getting vaccinated is one of the most effective (and simplest) ways to prevent disease.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
www.cdc.gov/vaccines

Michigan Department of Community Health,
www.michigan.gov/teenvaccines



Avoiding Infectious Diseases (continued)

Insect Bites

Keep skin covered when in insect-infested areas.

Use insect repellent.

Food and Water Contamination

Be alert to any warnings from the government about contaminated food or water.

Follow the four food safety guidelines:

Cook

- Use a food thermometer. No one can tell if food is cooked safely by how it looks.
- Food is safely cooked when it is hot enough inside to kill the harmful bacteria that cause illness.

Clean

- Wash your hands with warm or cold water and soap for 20 seconds. Wash them before and after you handle food.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, tools, and counter tops with hot, soapy water. Wash them before you prepare each food item and between foods.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water. Rinse them even if they have skins and rinds that are not eaten.

Separate

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and their juices away from other food in the grocery cart. One way to do this is to place these foods in plastic fruit/vegetable bags, if provided by the grocery.
- Store raw meat, poultry, and seafood in a container or on a plate. This keeps juices from dripping on other foods.
- Use one cutting board and knife for raw meat, poultry, and seafood. Use a different one for salads and ready-to-eat food.

Chill

- Chill leftovers within two hours. Chill takeout foods within two hours.
- Keep the fridge at 40 °F or below. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure it is cold enough.
- Thaw meat, poultry, and seafood in the fridge, not on the counter. Don't overstuff the fridge.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov

Mayo Clinic, <http://www.mayoclinic.com>

Partnership for Food Safety Education, <http://www.fightbac.org>