

Stopping the Spread of Germs at Home, Work and School

How Germs Spread

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called “droplet spread.”

This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.



How to Stop the Spread of Germs

In a nutshell: take care to

- ❖ Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze
- ❖ Clean your hands often
- ❖ Remind your children to practice healthy habits, too



Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, clean your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze. You may try to use your coat or jacket to cover a cough/sneeze. Or try covering a cough/sneeze near your armpit if you do not have a tissue.

The “Happy Birthday” song helps keep your hands clean?

Not exactly. Yet we recommend that when you wash your hands—with soap and warm water—that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds. That’s about the same time it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice!

Alcohol-Based Hand Wipes and Gel Sanitizers Work Too

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn’t need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.”

Reference: CDC website: <http://www.healthinschools.org/sh/influenza.asp>

Protecting Our Community’s Health

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