

# Prevent spreading infections

## Keep your kids protected with these healthy habits



Organisms like bacteria or viruses in the body are harmless in most cases. Sometimes, they can make people sick. These are called infections. An example is catching a cold. People with weakened immune systems, such as people with HIV, need to be extra careful to protect themselves from getting ill.

Avoid spreading germs and diseases that can cause illness. Help your kids with these healthy habits:

### **Wash your hands often**

Clean hands are one of the best defenses against germs. Wash them well using running water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Make handwashing a part of your child's routine, especially:

- Before, during and after handling food
- Before and after cleaning a cut or being near someone who is ill
- Before eating
- Before touching a baby, their face or their mouth
- After touching animals, their food or their waste
- After using the bathroom or blowing their nose

### **Follow safe animal contact**

If you visit or own pets or live animals, take these extra steps with your child to stay well:

- Prevent pet bites and scratches by avoiding rough play.
- Keep live animals like chickens and their cages and supplies outside.
- Do not eat or drink in animal areas.
- If your teen is pregnant or has a weak immune system, have them avoid cleaning cat litter boxes.



### **Practice food and water safety**

- Don't eat raw or undercooked food like batter or meat until after its cooked or baked.
- Don't drink untreated water from lakes or rivers. Drink bottled or filtered water if you're camping or outdoors.
- Refrigerate raw food until its ready to cook or eat.
- Clean surfaces and utensils after use and fruits and veggies before eating them.

### **Get vaccines**

Severe illnesses caused by harmful bacteria can make people very sick, and can even cause death. Talk to the doctor about the vaccines (shots) your child needs to stay protected from diseases like the flu, measles and pneumonia.

## **Stay safe from insect bites**

- Use an EPA-registered insect repellent to protect against serious diseases spread by mosquitoes, like Zika or dengue fever.
- Apply sunscreen first, then repellent. Follow label instructions.
- Drain all sitting water from outside potted plants or containers.
- If your teen is pregnant, do not let them travel to areas with risk of Zika. It can give serious birth defects to unborn babies.

## **Practice safe sex**

If your teen is sexually active, tell them to let their sex partners know if they're living with an infectious disease. Also, tell your teen to use condoms every time they have sex.

## **Keep personal items personal**

- Use your own drug injection equipment. Blood can stay in syringes and needles after use and be passed to the next user.
- Use your own toothbrush, towel, comb and makeup.
- Do not share drinking glasses or dining utensils.



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