

Infection Control at Home

Cleanliness and good hygiene help prevent infection. “Contaminated materials” such as bandages, dressings or surgical gloves can spread infection, and harm the environment. If not disposed of properly, these items can injure family members and other who could come into contact with them.

Certain illnesses and treatments (i.e. chemotherapy, dialysis, AIDS, diabetes, burns) can make people more susceptible to infection. Your nurse will instruct you on the use of protective clothing (gowns/gloves) if they are necessary.

Notify your physician and/or home care staff if you develop any of the following signs and symptoms of infection:

Pain/tenderness/redness or swelling of body part	
Inflamed skin/rash/sores/ulcers	Fever or chills
• Painful urination	• Sore throat/cough
Confusion	Increased tiredness/weakness
Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea	Pus (green/yellow drainage)
You can help control infection by following these guidelines	

Wash your hands before and after giving care to someone, before handling or eating foods and after using the toilet, changing a diaper, handling soiled linens, touching pets, coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose. Hand washing needs to be done frequently and correctly.

Using soap and water, place hands together under water and rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds (Sing Happy Birthday 2 times). Wash all surfaces, including palms, back of hands, between fingers, under fingernails, wrists. Rinse and dry with a clean towel. Air dry if a clean towel is not available or if the towel is shared with others. If using a paper towel, throw it in the trash after use. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet. Pat dry to avoid chapping and cracking. Apply hand lotion to help prevent and soothe dry skin.

Waterless Antiseptic Hand Cleanser can be used if hands are not visibly dirty, contaminated or soiled with blood or other body fluids. Use an alcohol-based hand rub for routinely decontaminating hands. The antiseptic agent should contain 60-90% ethyl or isopropyl alcohol. When using a waterless antiseptic hand cleanser, make sure the cap or spout is open. Place a quantity of the cleanser (about the size of a dime) in the palm of one hand, rub hands vigorously covering all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

**Washing your hands is the single most important step
in controlling the spread of infection.**