

Prevent the Spread of Germs

Here are some simple tips to help keep respiratory infections and many other contagious diseases from spreading, especially during the cough, cold and “flu” season.

Respiratory infections affect the nose, throat and lungs; they include influenza (the “flu”), colds and pertussis (whooping cough). The germs (viruses and bacteria) that cause these infections are spread from person to person in droplets from the nose, throat and lungs of someone who is sick.

You can help stop the spread of these germs by practicing “respiratory etiquette,” or good health manners.

Here are some tips to help prevent spreading your germs to others, and to avoid catching someone else’s germs.

Keep your germs to yourself

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
- Discard used tissues in the trash as soon as you can.
- Always wash your hands after sneezing, blowing your nose, or coughing, or after touching used tissues or handkerchiefs. Wash hands often if you are sick.
- Use warm water and soap or alcohol-based hand sanitizers to wash your hands.
- Try to stay home if you have a cough and fever.
- See your doctor as soon as you can if you have a cough and fever, and follow their instructions. Take medicine as prescribed and get lots of rest.
- If asked, use face masks provided in your doctor’s office or clinic’s waiting room. Follow office and clinic staff’s instructions to help stop the spread of germs.

Keep the germs away

- Wash your hands before eating, or touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Wash your hands after touching anyone who is sneezing, coughing or blowing their nose.
- Don't share things like towels, lipstick, toys, or anything else that might be contaminated with respiratory germs.
- Don't share food, utensils or beverage containers with others.



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