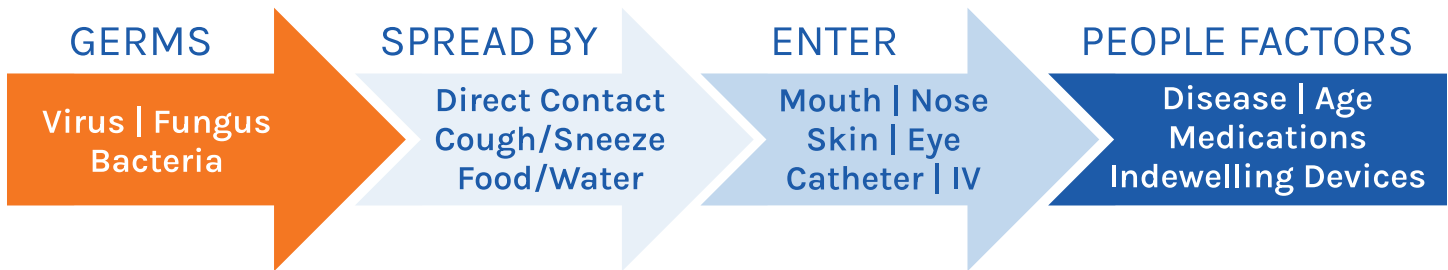


Infections happen when germs like a virus, bacteria, fungus or parasite enter a person's body. Germs can be spread by directly touching someone, coughing, sneezing, through contaminated dressings, laundry, food, water, feces and blood. Use gloves when you are handling dressings and other items that have been exposed to blood, other body fluids and feces.



Risk of infection is increased for certain people, including newborns, older adults and people with intravenous lines, catheters, AIDS/HIV, diabetes or cancer.

HAND WASHING

The best way to stop germs from spreading is through good hand washing.

Wash your hands:

- > After using the toilet, changing diapers and changing wound dressings
- > After coughing, sneezing or nose blowing
- > After touching soiled linens or clothing
- > After removing disposables gloves after providing patient care
- > Before and after handling food

Follow these steps when you wash your hands:

- > Wet your hands under warm running water
- > Using liquid soap, scrub your palms, back of your hands, between each finger and under your nails
- > Rinse your hands well, holding your hands downward
- > Use clean towel to dry hands

PERSONAL ITEMS

To prevent the spread of infection, don't share personal items such as:

- > Combs and brushes
- > Toothbrushes
- > Cups and eating utensils
- > Towels and washcloths

FOOD-BORNE ILLNESS

Keep food safe by following these guidelines:

- > Cook food to proper temperature
- > Refrigerate foods at 40 degrees F or less, and throw away spoiled food
- > Wash fruits and vegetables with running water
- > Use separate cutting boards for raw and cooked foods
- > Keep work surfaces clean
- > Use hot, soapy water to wash dishes

URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Women have a greater risk of developing a urinary tract infection; however, men also develop urinary infections.

The common causes of urinary tract infections are:

- > Waiting too long to urinate
- > Sexual intercourse
- > Poor wiping after using the toilet
- > Diabetes
- > Previous urinary tract infections
- > Enlarged gland for men

To prevent urinary tract infections:

- > Urinate at least every two hours and completely empty your bladder
- > Drink plenty of water, as directed by your physician
- > Drink cranberry juice daily (4- to 6-ounce glass) or take Vitamin C supplements, with your physician's approval
- > Wipe front to back after urinating or having a bowel movement
- > Wear underwear with a cotton crotch

Symptoms of urinary tract infections:

- > Urge to urinate
- > Change in color or appearance of urine
- > Burning or pain in the bladder or urethra area (or rectum for men) when urinating
- > Fever, lethargy or feeling listless

CLEANING IN YOUR HOME

Use disinfectants to clean areas such as the bathroom and kitchen. Use utility gloves when working with disinfectants, especially chlorine bleach.

Bleach

- > Dilute 1 cup of bleach with 1 gallon of water to clean hard, color-safe surfaces (do not use on carpet or fabric)
- > Never mix bleach with other chemicals
- > Change bleach solution every 24 hours

Soiled Laundry

- > If body substances are present, wear gloves
- > Dispose of body substances
- > Wash soiled items separately from other laundry—use 1 cup of bleach for color-safe items
- > Do not shake linens so that germs do not fly into the air

Contaminated Waste

- > Place dressings, diapers, incontinence pads and gloves in plastic bag
- > Flush body substances (blood, urine, feces) in the toilet
- > Put contaminated needles and razors in a puncture-resistant container; ask your nurse about how to dispose of the “sharps” container when it is full

Call your physician or Home Health Care nurse if you have any of these symptoms:

- > Burning on urination, urinary urgency and other symptoms listed above
- > Fever, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea that continues
- > Green or yellow draining wound
- > Skin that is reddened and hot, and/or rash present
- > Sore throat and persistent cough