

# **How to Avoid Infectious Diseases**

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# Eat Well

- You need a strong immune system to fight off infectious diseases.
- A balanced diet that's high in nutrients and low in processed foods and red meat can keep your immune system at its best.
- Good eating habits can help you stay a healthy weight.
- That helps your immune system, too.



# Get Good Sleep

- This can help keep your immune system strong. While you sleep, your body makes proteins called cytokines, which help you fight inflammation and illness.
- Create a nighttime routine that helps you get some ZZZs.
- A good night's sleep after getting a vaccine helps it work better for you.



# Get Vaccinated

- Vaccines play an important role in keeping infectious diseases like hepatitis A and B, polio, mumps, measles, whooping cough, and the flu under control.
- Check with your doctor to make sure you and your family members are up to date on all your shots.



# Clean and Disinfect Surfaces

- Keep busy areas and rooms like kitchens and bathrooms clean.
- They're more likely to have germs or bacteria.
- Wash counters first with soap and water, then clean with disinfecting wipes, not antibacterial wipes.
- These products are good for your hands, but they don't kill viruses.
- Always wear gloves when you use a disinfectant, and wash your hands afterward.



# Wash Your Hands

- You can pick up germs just by touching unclean surfaces or things commonly touched by other people, like doorknobs, gas pumps, counters, and touch screens.
- You get the germs on your hands and **then touch your face.**
- You can avoid this by washing your hands with soap and water often.
- Just soap up your hands and rub them together under warm water for about 20 seconds -- long enough to sing “Happy Birthday” two times -- then dry them with a clean towel or let them air dry.



# Use Hand Sanitizer

- This is a good way to fight germs when soap and water isn't available, as long as it's at least **60% alcohol** and doesn't contain methanol, which can be harmful.
- But don't think of hand sanitizer as a substitute for washing your hands.
- It doesn't get rid of all types of germs and doesn't work as well if your hands are greasy.
- Be careful not to use too much sanitizer.
- That can create a layer of film on your hands that will actually trap germs.





# Don't Touch Your Face

- You probably touch your face a lot more often than you think.
- One study found that people touched their faces **an average of 23 times per hour.**
- That can lead to germs getting into your system via your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- It's also one more good reason to keep your hands clean.





# Keep Personal Items Personal

- Sharing things can also share germs and illnesses.
- The biggest problems come from sharing items that involve saliva (like a toothbrush, lip gloss) or blood (like shaving razors, nail clippers).
- If you're going to share food, take a bite from a clean portion and use your own utensils.
- Don't share drinks.
- Give everyone their own.
- And make sure to keep track of whose glass is whose.



# Handle Food Carefully

- The kitchen is home to a lot of germs.
- Always wash your hands before and after preparing food, and rinse off fruits and vegetables.
- Keep raw food away from cooked food, change out utensils and cutting boards that touch raw food, and wipe down counters where you've put raw food.
- When cooking, make sure all food is cooked **to the proper temperature:**
- 180 degrees for chicken
- 145 degrees for most meats like roast or steak
- Fish should be cooked until you can't see through it
- After meals, get leftovers into the refrigerator as soon as you can.



# Keep Your Distance

- Physical distancing is staying **at least 6 feet away** from people who are not in your household.
- That helps keep you away from any droplets that get released when someone **coughs, sneezes, or talks**.
- If you know infections like COVID-19 or the flu are spreading in your area, it's best if social activities are held outside in small groups where guests can stay physically apart.



# Wear a Mask

- To fight contagious, airborne illnesses like COVID-19, the CDC recommends face coverings when you're in public or near anyone who doesn't live with you.
- Surgical masks work well, but they can only be worn once.
- Cloth masks with multiple layers can block up to 70% of droplets and can be washed and reused regularly.
- Be sure to wash your hands right away if you touch the inside of your mask after wearing it.



# Keep an Eye on Your Pets

- Cats and dogs that go outside can bring in ticks and the illnesses associated with them, like encephalitis and Lyme disease.
- To make sure all the members of your household stay healthy, schedule regular checkups with the vet and stay on top of vaccinations, keep your pet's bedding and litter box clean, and don't let them eat raw foods or drink out of the toilet.



# Get Rid of Pests

- Rodents and insects can carry disease-causing germs, so keeping them out of your house is important to your family's health.
- Make sure food and garbage cans are covered, seal up holes or cracks in your house's walls, and disinfect any areas where you see signs of pests (like droppings).
- If you have issues you can't handle on your own, call an exterminator for help.

