

FIGHT GERMS, DON'T SHARE THEM!

A guide to reducing the spread of infection in the community

Germs are so small you cannot see them. They can live on our skin, in our body, in water and soil, in the air, and on surfaces around us. Everyone carries germs and most of them help us to stay healthy. But there are germs that can make you sick too.

Most germs are spread by your hands, whether they look dirty or not.



Following these simple steps will help reduce the spread of infection in the community.

CLEANING

Cleaning with detergent and water will stop the spread of germs in your home.

Remember to clean the frequently used areas that often get missed such as the toilet flush button, door handles and sink taps. Clean up any blood or other body fluid spills immediately. Handy hint – hot water sets blood into carpet so use cold water.

Encourage workers to routinely clean and disinfect surfaces with which they (or others) have come in contact. This is relevant to workplaces that have ‘hot-desks’ or operate under Activity Based Working (ABW) systems. Implement methods of routine cleaning and disinfection following the recommended standards and guidelines for COVID-19.

HAND WASHING

Wash your hands! This is the best way to stop germs from spreading from one person to another. Wash your hands often. And always wash them again after coughing, sneezing, touching things that are dirty, using a toilet, after smoking, after touching animals, after changing an infant or adult nappy, or if you touch blood or other body fluid.

Before cooking, eating or feeding others, make sure you have washed your hands!

Wash your hands using warm water and soap for 10 to 15 seconds. Dry your hands well with a clean towel. Use the corner of the towel to turn off the tap so that you don't pick up the germs you left there before washing your hands.

If your hands are not visibly dirty, but need cleaning, and there is not a sink available, you can clean your hands with a waterless product. Most pharmacies sell these waterless, antiseptic hand rubs.

COUGHING AND SNEEZING

If you need to cough or sneeze, do it into a tissue and put it into the bin straight away. Remember to wash your hands afterwards. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into the inside of your elbow instead of your hands. This helps to stop the spread of germs from your hands to other people.

BLOOD AND BODY FLUIDS

Blood and body fluids can carry dangerous germs. Always wear gloves if you are going to touch another person's blood or body fluid. Gloves are often used by nurses and doctors. So are masks, gowns and safety glasses. Don't be offended if you are asked to wear these protective items by your nurse or doctor. It will be to protect you and others.

Resources:

Australian Government Department of Health

www.health.gov.au

World Health Organisation

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Department of Health – Victoria

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>