

Information leaflet - Preventing the spread of infection

How to prevent infections

Infections are caused by germs, such as bacteria and viruses. They can make you feel unwell and cause symptoms such as a high temperature (fever), chills or feeling generally poorly.

There are simple things we can all do every day to help stop infections spreading.

Clean your hands - one of the most important ways to prevent infections.

- Wash your hands with **soap and water**:
 - after using the toilet.
 - before eating.
 - before preparing food.
- Dry your hands well after washing them.
- Use alcohol hand rub when soap and water is not available. Do not use alcohol hand rub when you have diarrhoea.

Catch it, Bin it, Kill it (Coughs, colds and sneezes) - protect family, friends and those you care for.

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue.
- Put the used tissue in a bin.
- Clean your hands afterwards.

Keep surfaces clean

- Germs can live on surfaces, including mobile phones.
- Clean surfaces regularly, especially in **bathrooms and toilets**.

Look after your personal hygiene

- Wash regularly.
- Use moisturiser to keep your skin healthy and prevent it becoming dry or cracked.
- Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Wash your clothes, towels and bedding regularly.

Stay at home if you are unwell

- If you are unwell, stay away from other people until you feel well enough to return to your normal activities. This helps stop infections spreading to others.
- Drink fluids to keep hydrated.

Keep your vaccinations up to date

- Vaccines are one of the best ways to protect yourself and others from many infections.
- It is important to keep up to date with your vaccines. If you are unsure check with your GP.

Remember

- **Antibiotics do not work against viruses**, such as colds and flu.
- **Do not keep leftover antibiotics** to use later.
- Take antibiotics exactly as your GP, nurse or pharmacist tells you.

If you are worried that you or someone you care for has an infection, contact **your GP, pharmacist or NHS 111**.

For urgent help call **999**.

If you have questions about preventing infections, speak to your GP or pharmacist or visit the Infection Prevention and Control Digital Hub - www.wchc.nhs.uk/ipchub