



The E - Bulletin is a service provided from the in-house team of physicians (Specialists, GP's & the CEDARS Training Center) at the **CEDARS – Jebel Ali International Hospital** in order to raise awareness about health issues.

## Practicing hygiene habits

**Hygiene** refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases. It is a set of habits that would enable you to be clean, neat, healthy and happy. Hygiene habits starts within oneself and to surroundings.

### Home and everyday life hygiene

There is no place like home. However it can also be a good breeding ground for the spread of infectious diseases. Moreover, good hygiene habits starts at home. It includes procedures used in a variety of domestic situations such as hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, food and water hygiene, general home hygiene (hygiene of environmental sites and surfaces), care of domestic animals, and home healthcare



*Boiling of water is good to ensure that your drinking water is free of contamination.*

#### **Household water treatment and safe storage ensure drinking water is safe for consumption**

Since water can become contaminated during storage at home (e.g. by contact with contaminated hands or using dirty storage vessels), safe storage of water in the home is also important

Methods for treatment of drinking water, include:

- Chemical disinfection using chlorine or iodine
- Boiling
- Filtration using ceramic filters
- Solar disinfection - Solar disinfection is an effective method, especially when no chemical disinfectants are available.
- UV irradiation

#### **Laundry hygiene**

Laundry hygiene pertains to the practices that prevent or minimize disease and the spreading of disease via soiled clothing and household linens such as towels. Items most likely to be contaminated with pathogens are those that come into direct contact with the body, e.g., underwear, personal towels, facecloths, nappies. Cloths or other fabric items used during food preparation, or for cleaning the toilet or cleaning up material such as feces or vomit are a particular risk.

##### *Laundry Hygiene Tips*

###### *Do*

- Run a hot wash (at least 60 degrees Celsius) once a week to stop germs and odors building up in the washing machine.
- Keep dirty laundry away from food preparation surfaces.
- Wash your hands after handling dirty laundry.
- Dry your laundry promptly to help prevent any residual germs multiplying.



*Wash at 60 degrees Celsius or above using any laundry product to destroy bacteria and viruses or wash at 40 degrees Celsius using a bleach-containing laundry (powder or tablet) product.*

**Don't**

- Hand-rinse heavily soiled items as this may contaminate sinks and taps. Remove solid waste (e.g. vomit and feces) into the toilet then machine-wash.
- Overload the washing machine.

**Food hygiene at home**

Food hygiene is concerned with the hygiene practices that prevent food poisoning.

*The five key principles of food hygiene,*

- Prevent contaminating food with pathogens spreading from people, pets, and pests.
- Separate raw and cooked foods to prevent contaminating the cooked foods.
- Cook foods for the appropriate length of time and at the appropriate temperature to kill pathogens.
- Store food at the proper temperature.
- Use safe water and raw materials

**Hygiene in the kitchen, bathroom and toilet**

Routine cleaning of "contact" (hand, food and drinking water) sites and surfaces (such as toilet seats and flush handles, door and tap handles, work surfaces, bath and basin surfaces) in the kitchen, bathroom and toilet reduces the risk of spread of germs.

The infection risk from the toilet itself is not high, provided it is properly maintained although some splashing and aerosol formation can occur during flushing, particularly where someone in the family has diarrhea. Germs can survive in the scum or scale left behind on baths and wash basins after washing and bathing.

Water left stagnant in the pipes of showers can be contaminated with germs that become airborne when the shower is turned on. If a shower has not been used for some time, it should be left to run at a hot temperature for a few minutes before use.

Thorough cleaning is important in preventing the spread of fungal infections. Molds can live on wall and floor tiles and on shower curtains. Molds can be responsible for infections, cause allergic responses, deteriorate/damage surfaces and cause unpleasant odors. Primary sites of fungal growth are inanimate surfaces, including carpets and soft furnishings. Air-borne fungi are usually associated with damp conditions, poor ventilation or closed air systems.

**Kitchen hygiene tips**

- **Wash rinds** - Scrub and rinse melons, squash, and other foods with inedible rinds to remove bacteria that can transfer to the flesh when you cut into it.
- **Take temperature of your food** - Few ever used a food thermometer, but it's the best way to tell if you cooked your meal enough to kill bacteria. steak, roast, and lamb chops need to reach 62 degrees Celsius, ground beef isn't safe to eat until it's 72 degrees Celsius, and poultry like chicken requires 74 degrees Celsius. Pick up a food thermometer (digital works best) in any housewares store.
- **Keep your sponges clean** - Microwave sponges on medium for a minute or run them through the dishwasher, including a dry cycle.
- **Use two cutting boards** - Designate one for meat and the other for veggies, so that bacteria from uncooked beef and poultry don't stray into your salad. For the same reason, use separate knives for slicing meat and veggies.
- **Sterilize the fridge** - Every couple of weeks, wipe down refrigerator drawers using hot water and soap. Rinse with warm water and dry with a dishcloth. Regularly check your refrigerator for items that may need to be disposed.
- **Wash your hands frequently.**

**Toilet and Bathroom hygiene tips**

- Good handwashing practice is the single most important infection control measure. Hands should be thoroughly washed with soap and running water after using the toilet
- Flush after use to keep the toilet bowl clean. If someone has diarrhoea, toilets etc. should be disinfected after each time they use it.
- Regularly clean baths, wash basins and shower trays regularly. This can be achieved by cleaning with a detergent cleaner followed by thorough rinsing with running water
- Hygienically clean surfaces in the bathroom and toilet regularly, with particular attention to toilet seats, toilet handles and other hand contact surfaces
- Cleaning cloths can easily spread microbes around the bathroom and toilet. They should be hygienically cleaned after each use
- Where floors or other surfaces become contaminated with faeces or vomit, they should be hygienically cleaned at once
- If someone has vomited in the toilet or bathroom, if possible, vacate the room and ventilate by opening windows for a short time to disperse aerosol particles
- Towels and face cloths should be regularly laundered using a laundry cycle which will remove/destroy any pathogenic organisms.
- Do not share towels, facecloths, toothbrushes and other personal hygiene items with the infected or carrier person.
- If the shower has not been used for a long period of time, leave it to run at a hot temperature for a few minutes before use
- Make sure that tiles and grout are in good condition and are regularly cleaned. An anti-fungal cleaner may be needed.
- Hygienically clean or launder shower curtains regularly.

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## Personal hygiene

Personal hygiene involves those practices performed by an individual to care for one's bodily health and well being, through cleanliness. Motivations for personal hygiene practice include reduction of personal illness, healing from personal illness, optimal health and sense of well being, social acceptance and prevention of spread of illness to others.

What is considered proper personal hygiene can be cultural-specific and may change over time. Other practices that are generally considered proper hygiene include bathing regularly, washing hands regularly and especially before handling food, washing scalp hair, keeping hair short or removing hair, wearing underwear, wearing clean clothing, brushing one's teeth, cutting finger nails, besides other practices. Some practices are gender-specific, such as by a woman during her menstrual cycle. People tend to develop a routine for attending to their personal hygiene needs. Other personal hygienic practices would include covering one's mouth when coughing, disposal of soiled tissues appropriately, making sure toilets are clean, and making sure food handling areas are clean, besides other practices. Some cultures do not kiss or shake hands to reduce transmission of bacteria by contact.

### Personal hygiene for men

A build-up of secretions called smegma can form under the foreskin of uncircumcised men. If you are uncircumcised, gently pull back the foreskin when you have a shower and clean with water. You can use soap if you like, but make sure you rinse it off well.

### Personal hygiene for women

The vagina is able to clean itself no special care is needed other than washing the external genitals. Do not put anything like douches into the vagina, as the delicate skin can be damaged. Here are some personal hygiene suggestions for women:

- **Menstruation** - wash your body, including your genital area, in the same way as you always do. Change tampons and sanitary napkins regularly, at least four to five times a day. Always wash your hands before and after handling a tampon or pad.
- **Cystitis** - is an infection of the bladder. This is a common condition for sexually active young women. Urinating after sexual intercourse can help to flush out any bacteria that may be in the urethra and bladder.
- **Thrush** - some soaps and detergents can irritate the skin of the vagina, and make thrush infections more likely. Some people find that they often get thrush when they use antibiotics. Use mild soap and unperfumed toilet paper. Avoid tight, synthetic underwear. Try cotton underwear, and change regularly. There is medical treatment for thrush, so talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

### Respiratory hygiene

Correct respiratory and hand hygiene coughing and sneezing reduces the spread of germs particularly during the cold and flu season.

- Carry tissues and use them to catch coughs and sneezes
- Dispose of tissues as soon as possible
- Clean your hands by soap and water or using an alcohol hand sanitizer

### Oral hygiene

Good oral hygiene includes regular brushing and flossing.

Bad breath can be caused by diseases of the teeth, gums and mouth such as infections. Most people have bad breath first thing in the morning because saliva is not made while sleeping. Some foods that can cause bad breath include garlic and onion. Mouthwashes, mouth sprays and flavored chewing gum can make your breath smell better for a while, but if you have a health problem in your mouth, you need to see your dentist.

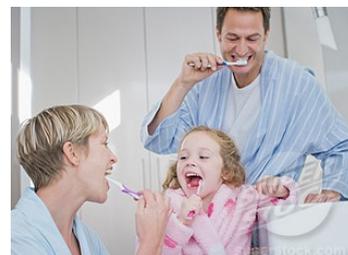
### Body Odor

Body odor is caused by a number of factors working in combination, including:

- Chemicals in sweat, including pheromones, which are made by the body and sexually attract (or repel) other people.
- Wastes excreted through the skin, such as metabolized alcohol.
- The actions of bacteria that live on the skin and feed on dead skin cells and sweat.
- Unwashed clothes such as underwear and socks.



*To keep the body in good health is a duty ... otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear.*



### How to prevent body odor:

- Take a bath daily at least twice.
- Change your clothes, including undergarments and socks daily.
- Wash underwear after each use, and other clothes at least when they get dirty, sweaty, or when they do not smell clean.
- Socks and shoes may be changed 2-3 times per day if they get sweaty, and keeping feet dry can reduce odor and irritation.

## Handwashing

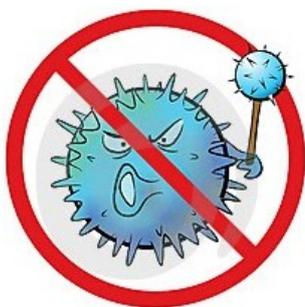


Most infections, especially colds and gastroenteritis, are caught when we put our unwashed hands, which have germs on them, to our mouth. Some infections are caught when other people's dirty hands touch the food we eat.

Hands and wrists should be washed with clean soap and water, using a brush if your fingernails are dirty. Dry your hands with something clean, such as paper towels or hot air dryers.

### You should always wash your hands:

- After using the toilet
- After handling dogs or other animals
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After touching garbage



### What is the right way to wash your hands?

- Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs.



## Medical hygiene

Medical hygiene pertains to the hygiene practices related to the administration of medicine, and medical care, that prevents or minimizes disease and the spreading of disease.

Medical hygiene practices include:

- Isolation or quarantine infectious persons or materials to prevent spread of infection.
- Sterilization of instruments used in surgical procedures.
- Use of protective clothing and barriers, such as masks, gowns, caps, eyewear and gloves.
- Proper bandaging and dressing of injuries.
- Safe disposal of medical waste.
- Disinfection of reusables (i.e. linen, pads, uniforms)
- Scrubbing up, handwashing, especially in an operating room, but in more general health-care settings as well, where diseases can be transmitted.

*When travelling, take special care if you're not sure whether the water is safe. Suggestions include:*

- Drink only bottled water.
- Do not use tap water to clean your teeth.
- When you wash your hands, make sure they are totally dry before you touch any food.
- Do not wash fruit or vegetables in unsafe water.
- If you have no other water source, make sure the water is boiled before you drink it by holding it at a rolling boil for one minute.
- Make sure any dishes, cups or other utensils are totally dry after they are washed.

*Good personal hygiene is one of the most effective ways to protect ourselves and others from many illnesses, such as gastroenteritis.*

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## Office hygiene

Since a lot of time is also spent in the office, one should also apply hygiene habits in the office. Cleanliness should not only be relied on housekeeping staff. Maintain cleanliness at all times.

- Use a disinfectant wipe once a day on your desk, phone, computer mouse, keyboard and desk drawer.
- Do not store food in drawers as it makes them moldy.
- Bin anything edible in the fridge or on your desk on Friday that's been there since Monday.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizers regularly.
- View desk hygiene as a regular task, not something to do in the gap between Christmas and New Year.



## Methods to prevent infection spread

Some diseases have become immune to the antibiotics we use, As a result, controlling diseases and preventing infections from spreading are more crucial than ever.

- Wash your hands frequently – especially before preparing food, before and after eating, after using the restroom.
- Insist that your healthcare providers wash their hands and use gloves.
- Don't insist that your physician give you antibiotics if you don't need them. Antibiotics have no effect on illnesses caused by viruses.
- Take prescribed antibiotics exactly as instructed. Do not stop taking them without checking with your physician even if the medicine makes you feel better – or worse.
- Keep your immunizations up to date especially Chicken pox, hepatitis A & B, Influenza and Tetanus.
- Follow safe sexual practices.
- Do not send your child to day care center or to a school with symptoms of vomiting diarrhea, and/or fever.
- Do not use IV drugs. If you do, do not share needles.
- Do not share personal items- such as razor blades, toothbrushes, combs, and hair brushes – and do not eat or drink from other's plates or glasses.
- Keep kitchen surfaces clean especially when preparing meat, chicken and fish; disinfect kitchen surfaces.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold especially when they will be left out for a long time.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as face mask, gloves, goggles, boots, etc as instructed
- Anticipate your exposure
  - use sharp-safety devices
  - Clean surfaces regularly
  - Practice appropriate waste disposal always ✕



*“Make hygiene a part of your daily routine”*

### Medical Consultant for December 2013



**Aryamol Sasidharan**  
Infection Control Nurse

Aryamol Sasidharan works as Infection Control Nurse at CEDARS – Jebel Ali International Hospital. She is responsible for preparing and implementing all infection control related policies and procedures in the hospital; she gives infection control related training to the employees on a regular basis and implements programs related to infection control to protect the healthcare workers, visitors and others. She is also in-charge of all infectious related patients. She is a member of Infection Control Committee and Quality department. Prior to that, she was working as staff nurse in Out-patient Department. She also has worked as OT staff nurse in Cosmopolitan Hospital, Trivandrum, Kerala, India and at Sree Ramakrishna Ashrama Charitable Hospital as Staff Nurse in Labour Room, Medical and Surgical Wards.

She graduated with Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery from Sree Sarada School of Nursing, Trivandrum, India.

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