



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.

## Hand and Environmental Hygiene

Spending time together during the holidays is something that families look forward to, but they are not just bringing presents into the house when they enter the front door. They would also want folks to stay healthy for the holidays so they can spread cheer – not germs – and make happy memories with their friends and family. With the flurry of holiday activity and get-togethers, keeping families healthy and happy can seem like an impossible challenge. With the necessary tools and knowledge, avoiding cold and flu can be a reality this year.



### How to prevent flu



In addition to proper disinfection, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends consumers take the following three actions to protect themselves and others from the flu:

- Take time to get the flu vaccine.
- Take everyday preventive actions to help stop the spread of germs such as washing your hands often with soap and water, and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.
- Take flu antiviral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

*Infectious diseases (ID) circulating in the home and community remain a significant concern. Several demographic, environmental, and healthcare trends are combining to make it likely that the threat of ID will increase in coming years.*

*Two factors are largely responsible for this trend:*

- *the constantly changing nature and range of pathogens to which we are exposed*
- *the demographic changes occurring in the community, which affect our resistance to infection.*

### Impact of hand hygiene in reducing spread of infectious disease

- Hand hygiene is a key component of good hygiene practice in the home and community and can produce significant benefits in terms of reducing the incidence of infection, most particularly gastrointestinal infections but also respiratory tract and skin infections.
- Decontamination of hands can be carried out either by handwashing with soap or by use of waterless hand sanitizers, which reduce contamination on hands by removal or by killing the organisms. The health impact of hand hygiene within a given community can be increased by using products and procedures, either alone



- or in sequence.
- The impact of hand hygiene in reducing ID risks could be increased by convincing people to apply hand hygiene procedures correctly (eg, wash their hands correctly) and at the correct time.
- To optimize health benefits, promotion of hand hygiene should be accompanied by hygiene education and should also involve promotion of other aspects of hygiene.

## Infectious gastrointestinal (GI) disease and hygiene



### Foodborne disease

Rates of foodborne illness remain at unacceptably high levels, despite the efforts of food producers to ensure the safety of the food supply. Raw meat and poultry and fruits and vegetables bought at retail premises may be contaminated with pathogens. Good hygiene practices during food preparation in the home are therefore essential in preventing cross contamination of prepared foods from raw foods and preventing contamination of food by infected household members or domestic animals.



### Other infectious GI disease

A substantial proportion of the total infectious GI disease burden in the community is because of person-to-person spread within households, particularly for viral infections, where it is most often the cause. Person-to-person transmission in the home can occur by direct hand-to-mouth transfer, via food prepared in the home by an infected person, or by transmission because of aerosolized particles resulting from vomiting or fluid diarrheal. Apart from transmission by inhalation of airborne particles, these infections are preventable by good hygiene practice.



### Respiratory tract infections and hygiene

Approximately 80% of upper RT infections are caused by rhinoviruses. Other species causing acute rhinitis are coronaviruses, parainfluenza viruses (PIV), respiratory syncytial viruses (RSV), and adenoviruses. Although colds are generally mild and self-limiting, they represent a significant economic burden because of loss in productivity and medical costs. Furthermore, secondary infections produce complications, such as otitis media, sinusitis, or lower respiratory infections including pneumonia, with its risk of mortality, particularly in elderly adults.



### Skin and wound infections and hygiene

Skin and wound infections are common in the home and community, but most are self-limited. In recent years, MRSA has been increasingly found to cause infections in healthy members of the community without apparent risk factors. These strains primarily cause skin and soft tissue infections but can also cause invasive infections such as sepsis, pneumonia, and osteomyelitis, which in some cases can be fatal.

## Hand hygiene



Handwashing is easy to do and it is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of many types of infection and illness in all settings—from your home and workplace to child care facilities and hospitals. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community.

When should you wash your hands?

- 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 using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet

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- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

## Proper handwashing



- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** 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 clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.



### What should you do if you don't have soap and clean, running water?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of microbes on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands.

**Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.**

### How do you use hand sanitizers?

1. Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

*If one accepts handwashing as the primary weapon in the infection control arsenal, then personal choice for handwashing rests with the individual foot soldier in the battle against the transmission of infection or disease.*

## Medical Consultant for December 2014



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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.

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