

# Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

## Standard Precautions - Hygiene

It's not possible to clean or disinfect every surface you have contact with, but keeping hands clean is the first line of defense for keeping infection causing germs from reaching your mouth, nose, or eyes, where they can make you and then others, sick.

**Wash your hands.** It's the single *most important way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.* Proper hand-washing requires soap and water. By rubbing, soap breaks down the grease and dirt that carry most germs. We all should know the importance of washing after using the toilet, yet less than 50 percent of people actually do it—and almost no one does it properly.

**When to wash your hands:** Always after toileting, after handling raw foods, whenever you've been in contact with anything or anyone “suspicious,” and periodically throughout the day. Our bodies naturally carry germs on them. Most of these germs are harmless, and some are even essential to our health. However, germs from other sources, such as raw meat, can also survive on hands, and these can be easily transferred to other surfaces, increasing the risk of cross-contamination. Because our hands are in frequent contact with our eyes, nose, and mouth, it's easy to see how dirty hands spread germs and illnesses, such as the common cold, flu and food poisoning.



As important as it is to properly wash your hands, it's equally important to **dry them correctly** too. The bacteria and viruses that are left on your hands after even a good washing thrive on moist skin, so dry your hands thoroughly after each wash.

Hot-air hand dryers are *not* always the best way to dry hands, primarily because most people stop drying before their hands are really dry. Do not wipe damp hands on your clothes to dry them. The most effective way of reducing hand-borne bacteria is to dry thoroughly washed hands on clean paper towels.

Hand sanitizer gels can be used to kill germs, but they should *not* always replace hand washing. Hand sanitizers can build up on skin, so wash your hands the regular way—with soap and warm water—after every fourth use of a sanitizer.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

### Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

#### Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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## SAFETY TIPS—Health Basics for the Kitchen

The dirtiest place in your house isn't your bathroom—it's your kitchen sink. Cleaner kitchen tips:

- Don't let food linger on countertops before cooking and serving it.
- Clear the sink of dishes and pans and use different towels to dry hands and cookware.
- Keep cutting boards free of nicks and grooves where bacteria can grow.
- Keep your refrigerator working properly, and on a *cold* setting.
- Keep pets off countertops and dining tables.
- Damp dish towels breed bacteria. Keep them clean and dry, or use paper towels.
- Use dish rags, not sponges. Rags dry faster and you can launder them in hot water.

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### Hand Washing—Do It Right!

Hand washing is the single **most important way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.**

If the person in your care has an infection, use a bottle-dispensed antimicrobial soap.

1. Rub your hands for *at least* 30 seconds (about the time it takes to sing Happy Birthday slowly) to produce lots of lather. Lather-up away from running water so the lather is not washed away.
2. Use a nailbrush on your nails; keep your nails trimmed.
3. Wash front and back of hands, between fingers and at least two inches up your wrists.
4. Rinse well under warm running water. Repeat the process.
5. Dry your hands on a clean cloth or paper towel.

Source: WebMD; Centers for Disease Control

### Handling Soiled Laundry

Follow these tips to make soiled laundry handling safe:

- Always use gloves when handling soiled laundry.
- Carry dirty linens away from your body. Use a basket.
- Never shake soiled linens. (Germs may contaminate the floor and be spread throughout the house on the soles of shoes.)
- Use a leak-proof plastic bag, tied shut, for linen that contains body fluids or waste.
- Bag soiled laundry in the same place where it is used. Don't carry it to another room.
- Wash soiled linen separately from other clothes.
- Fill the machine with hot water, for whites add ¼ cup bleach and detergent, rinse twice, and then dry.
- Clean the washer by running it through a cycle with one-cup bleach or other disinfectant.



Remember; wash your hands before going on to another task!

### Taking Care of Yourself— Physical Activity

Balance your physical activities and food consumption. Physical activity helps you to reduce weight, slows down bone loss, controls diabetes and cholesterol levels, lessens the risk associated with some types of cancer, depression, and anxiety—and helps in preventing heart disease. Start by walking for about 10 minutes three times a week. Start slowly and increase the length of time gradually. Choose activities that you enjoy. Always check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Source US Department of Health & Human Services



### Stop the Spread

When cleaning, work from the cleanest to the dirtiest area and always wear gloves when giving personal care.

### Inspiration

When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on.  
~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

### Live Life Laughing!

Sometimes teenagers are people who act like babies when they are not treated like adults!



### Memory Care Hand Washing

Hand washing is often an issue in dementia care. Guide the person in your care to the sink and tell her step-by-step how to wash her hands. Explain to her what you are going to do next. Watch the flow of water so it is not too strong, as it can be frightening for a person with dementia.