

Breaking the Chain of Infection in Early Care and Education

You can help break the chain of infection!

- When you get enough sleep and exercise, and eat healthy food your immune system is better at fighting infections.
- When you get vaccinations against infectious disease you are less likely to get sick with those diseases. If you don't get sick, you won't expose others who are vulnerable, especially infants, elderly people, and people with chronic illnesses who don't have well-functioning immune systems.

Germes get into our bodies when we touch an object or surface where germes are living and then we touch our nose, eyes, or mouth, or we touch an open sore on our body, or we breathe germes in the air into our lungs.



Germes need a victim, like a person who is not immune to the germ.



Germes need a place to grow and multiply — a place that provides food and moisture.



A kitchen counter, a wound, or your lungs are some places where germes can grow.

After they grow, germes hitch a ride from the place where they grow, looking for a new victim.

Germes need a susceptible victim. When you are tired or rundown, your immune system doesn't work very well. If you haven't been vaccinated, you can get dangerous infectious diseases like measles, hepatitis, and whooping cough.



Infectious diseases are caused by germes. Bacteria and viruses are the germes that cause most illness in early care and education. Germes are also called microbes.



Some ways that germes travel:

- A toddler with a cold mouths a toy.
- Germes fly out of your nose and mouth when you sneeze and cough, or even talk or sing.
- You go to the bathroom and flush the toilet leaving germes on the toilet lever.

We can break the chain of infection by:

- cleaning, and by sanitizing and disinfecting when and where necessary.
- opening windows or using properly working ventilation equipment to bring in fresh air, filter germes, and dilute the germes in the air.



Some ways that germes spread:

- On contaminated sponges and mops
- In food shared when someone did not wash their hands or cover their sneeze
- In the blood of someone who has a blood borne infection
- In the air



We can break the chain of infection when we keep germes from traveling.

Some ways we stop germes:

- Sneeze in our sleeve.
- Cover our wounds.
- Wash our hands so germes go down the drain instead of on the door knob or on the food we eat for lunch.
- If recommended by the CDC, wear a mask. Even children as young as 2 can wear a mask. When everyone wears a mask, the risk of transmitting a respiratory disease goes way down.

