

Non-chemical ways to reduce the spread of infectious disease



Wash your hands!

- 1 This is the most important thing children and staff in ECE can do.**

Wash your hands:

- ◆ when you arrive in your ECE facility.
- ◆ after changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet, even if you wear gloves.
- ◆ before and after giving medication or treating or bandaging a wound.
- ◆ after using the bathroom. Children often need help remembering this and they need help with doing it.
- ◆ before and after you cook or handle food (especially raw meat and poultry).
- ◆ before you eat.
- ◆ after you clean.
- ◆ after you touch animals, including pets, or their toys, food, leashes, or waste.
- ◆ before and after you take care of a sick child.
- ◆ after you handle body fluids, blow your nose, or sneeze or cough into your hands (or you help a child do this) or after helping a child with a runny nose.
- ◆ after you work or play outside.
- ◆ after touching garbage, liners or cans.
- ◆ whenever they look dirty.
- ◆ more often when there is widespread infectious disease in your community.

- 2** When soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- ◆ Make sure it is at least 60% alcohol.
- ◆ Hand sanitizers will kill some, but not all, germs.
- ◆ Sanitizers are less effective if your hands are dirty. They don't remove dirt, and germs can hide under the dirt and remain on your hands.
- ◆ Do not use hand sanitizers on children under 24 months of age.

- 3** Avoid sneezing or coughing into your hands. It just contaminates your hands with germs and then you spread those germs everywhere you touch. Sneeze into your elbow, or use a tissue and then wash your hands.

Teach children how to do this, too. Toddlers are not too young to learn. Young children are learning important health habits that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.



Wear masks. During periods of wide community spread of serious infectious disease, public health officials may recommend that everyone, including children, wear masks. The practice of mask wearing has been shown to significantly reduce the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19. Children as young as two can be taught to wear a mask.



- 4** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs on your hands can enter the body when you touch your mucous membranes (the skin that lines the inside of the body) inside the eyes, nose and mouth.



- 5** Encourage older children and staff who are coughing or sneezing to leave a 6-foot space between themselves and others.

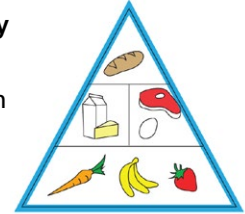
6 Vaccinate! Next to hand washing, vaccinations are the best way to protect against many infectious diseases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:



- ◆ Vaccinations protect the person who receives them.
- ◆ They also protect people in the community who do not have well-functioning immune systems, such as infants, the elderly and persons receiving chemotherapy. These people can't receive, or don't respond to, vaccinations. They are protected by the rest of us getting vaccinated. This is called herd immunity.

7 Stay home when you are sick, when possible.

8 Eat fresh fruits and vegetables and get plenty of sleep. This will help keep your immune system healthy. Your immune system protects you from infectious diseases.



Resources

Center for Disease Control (CDC), (2009) "Influenza (Flu) Fact Sheet: Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette in Healthcare Settings"

CDC, (2020) "Stay Home When You Are Sick",

CDC, (2021) "Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives"

CDC, (2021) "Your Guide to Masks"