

Preventing Illness at Home: Germs Spread From Diarrhea

Bacteria that cause infection are in human feces and can get on hands when using the toilet or changing diapers. Infection spreads when contaminated hands touch food, the mouth and other things, such as toys. Infection can spread easily from person-to-person, especially toddlers and babies.



Stop the Spread of Infection at Home

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap carefully after going to the bathroom or changing diapers, and before preparing food or drinks.
2. Wash your hands for 20 seconds—it can save you days of illness later.
3. Throw away dirty diapers in a closed lid container or bag them.
4. Clean and disinfect diaper changing areas after each use with disinfectant wipes or spray, or diluted chlorine bleach.
5. Do not prepare food for others while you have diarrhea and wait two days after it has stopped.
6. Keep hand sanitizer with you for when soap and water are not available.

If A Child Has Diarrhea, How to Stop the Spread to Others

1. Keep children with diarrhea away from non-ill children.
2. Keep them out of child care or school.
3. Supervise handwashing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet.
4. Keep his/her toys separate and wash them with hot, soapy water daily.
5. Do not allow swimming in pools or water parks until two days after diarrhea has stopped.
6. Bathe children separately.
7. Wash laundry for a child with diarrhea separately using hot water.



Handwashing Basics for Children

1. Teach by example - wash your hands with them.
2. Put handwashing reminders at children's eye level — draw a picture with them and keep it by the sink.
3. Make sure they are using lots of soap (liquid is best) and warm water.
4. Every time they wash their hands, reward them until it is a habit.
5. Keep a stool underneath the sink so that children can reach easily.
6. Teach children to wash their hands for as long as it takes them to sing their ABCs or "Happy Birthday" twice.

updated 4.23.09