

A communicable disease is an illness caused by germs that are spread from one person to another. Germs from an infected person can spread the illness to others. They can do this by coughing, sneezing, or not cleaning their hands frequently.

Who can get sick?

Anyone can become sick with a communicable disease.

People at higher risk of getting sick include: the elderly, people with weak immune systems and people with chronic health conditions. Individuals who live in communal living settings may be at higher risk of getting sick because they live in close quarters with a large number of people which can increase the number of germs they are exposed to.

What is a communicable disease outbreak?

An outbreak occurs when there is an increase in the number of people who are sick.

What can clients do to protect themselves and others?

- Get the influenza vaccine every year.
- Practice good personal hygiene.
- If you are sick with a cold, the flu, vomiting or diarrhea, tell your nurse.

The importance of hand hygiene - cleaning your hands is one of the most important ways of preventing the spread of germs

Wash your hands often:

- Before eating
- After using the washroom
- After blowing/wiping your nose
- After playing with pets

Alcohol Based Hand Rubs are a convenient and effective way to do hand hygiene. These are not to be used if your hands are visibly soiled.

To use this product properly you should:

- Cover all surfaces of your hands
- Rub the sides of your hands and between fingers
- Pay special attention to fingernail areas
- Rub hands until all of the sanitizer has dried



To Wash your hands properly:

- Use running water
- Lather soap on hands
- Use friction, rubbing surfaces of hands for 15 seconds
- Pay special attention to fingernail areas
- Pat hands dry with a paper towel
- Use a paper towel to shut off water tap
- Use lotion to moisturize hands when possible

Frequently-asked questions

What about visitors?

- * Family and other visitors can spread germs to clients they visit.
- * Visitors who are currently sick, will be asked not to visit.
- * Visitors are to visit one client only, preferably in the client room.
- * If you are sick, visitors may need to wear masks, eye protection, gloves or gowns when visiting
- * Visitors must clean their hands when entering and leaving an outbreak unit.

What will happen if I am sick?

- * You will be asked to stay in your room for a specified time.
- * Meals will be brought to your room.
- * If you need to leave your room, staff will remind you to clean your hands and ensure you are wearing clean clothing.

Why do I have to stay in my room when I am feeling better?

- * Even though you are feeling better, you can still spread germs.
- * Staying in your room until staff tell you that you can come out, will help other clients and staff from getting sick.

Why can't we have group activities?

- * Gathering clients together can help spread germs.
- * Cancelling group activities can help stop the spread of germs.

Can I leave the facility during an outbreak?

- * Yes, as long as you have not been asked to stay in your room.
- * You should not visit a hospital, child care facility or a senior's home while your home has an outbreak.