

# 3 Three Things You Can Do To Prevent Infection

A Speak Up<sup>SM</sup> safety initiative



**Joint Commission**  
on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations  
Setting the Standard for Quality in Health Care

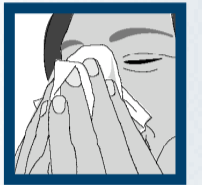
# 1.



## Clean your hands.

- Use soap and warm water. Rub your hands vigorously for at least 15 seconds.
- Or, if your hands do not look dirty, clean them with alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Rub the sanitizer all over your hands, especially under your nails and between your fingers, until your hands are dry.
- Clean your hands before touching or eating food. Clean them after you use the bathroom, take out the trash, change a diaper, handle money or play with a pet.
- Doctors, nurses, dentists and other health care providers come into contact with lots of bacteria and viruses. So before they treat you, ask them if they've cleaned their hands.

# 2.



## Cover your mouth and nose.

Many diseases are spread through sneezes and coughs. When you sneeze or cough, the germs can travel 3 feet or more! Controlling a cough if you are sick can help prevent the spread of infection to others.

- Use a tissue! Keep tissues handy at home, at work and in your pocket. Be sure to throw away used tissues and then clean your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the crook of your elbow or hands. If you use your hands, wash your hands right away.

# 3.



## Avoid close contact.

- If you are sick with a fever or other symptoms of a contagious illness, stay away from other people and stay home. Call work or school and tell them you are sick.
- When you go for medical treatment, call ahead and ask if there's anything you can do to avoid infecting people in the waiting room.

These steps can help prevent the spread of infection from colds, influenza ("the flu")\*, and diseases like:

- Pneumonia\*
- Whooping cough\*
- SARS
- Chicken pox\*
- Tuberculosis
- Strep throat
- Mumps, measles, and rubella\*  
(also known as German measles)

\*Remember to get a shot to prevent this disease or infection.

### Supported by:

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