

Stopping Germs at Home, Work, and School

How Germs Spread ...

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu are spread is from person to person in respiratory droplets of coughs and sneezes. This is called “droplet spread.” This can happen when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. Sometimes germs also can be spread when a person touches respiratory droplets from another person on a surface like a desk and then touches his or her own eyes, mouth, or nose before washing their hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.

How to Stop the Spread of Germs ...

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also are effective.

In order to keep germs from spreading, avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

What you can do ...

If you believe have flu symptoms, stay home. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

If you’ve got flu symptoms and you’ve recently been to a high-risk area such as Mexico, see your doctor.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Additional information about swine flu can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/investigation.htm>

http://www.idph.state.il.us/flu/swine_flu_mex.htm