



Reducing the Spread of Illness in the Home

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

This Topic reviews ways to reduce the spread of illness in the home by washing hands, cleaning counters, and cleaning household objects regularly.

Say: "Build Awareness": *Conversation starters that set a supportive tone when introducing the Topic.*

Explore: "Ask Probing Questions": *Questions to assess, gather information, and inform person-centered coaching support.*

Act: "Identify Next Steps": *Optional resources and solutions to educate and support the caregiver.*

ALERTS that require prompt action related to this topic:

- *At-risk household member*
- *Household member is sick*
- *Home is cluttered*
- *Caregiver feels unwell*
- *Caregiver refuses self-care*
- *No room for sick person to isolate*

Say: "Build Awareness"

Let's talk about reducing the spread of illness in the home. It is important to take steps that reduce or prevent the spread of illness in the home. It is especially important when there are elderly or "at-risk" members of the household. People who are "at-risk" are those with health conditions. These conditions may include heart, lung, and kidney disease. They may also include diabetes and conditions that suppress the immune system. Reducing the spread of illness in the home helps keep everyone safe and healthy.

If there is an elderly or at-risk member of the home, it is extra important to reduce the spread of illness. It is important to be very careful around these individuals. Every interaction may increase the at-risk person's risk for getting very sick. Try to protect these loved ones as much as possible. They need your most careful caregiving support!

Keep everyone in the home safe by washing hands. Hand washing is one of the best ways to reduce the spread of illness. It is most effective when a person uses soap, washes for at least 20 seconds, and dries their hands completely. It is important to wash hands before and after providing care and interacting with an elderly or at-risk household member. It is also good to wash hands before and after eating, after using the bathroom, and as soon as you come home from a public place.

In addition to washing hands, it is important to clean household surfaces. Counters and tables should be wiped before and after they are used. Spend extra time cleaning surfaces used for food! It is also important to regularly wipe down doorknobs, refrigerator surfaces, cabinets, handrails, and light switches.

Household objects should also be cleaned regularly. Eating utensils should be cleaned with soap and hot water. If you have a dishwasher, use it to disinfect dishes and utensils after meals. Toys, television and gaming remotes, and other shared objects should be wiped down or washed regularly. Cleaning these objects prevents germs from spreading between members in the home.

Sometimes, an illness cannot be avoided. If a member of the home gets sick, it is important to give them as much space as possible. In the best case, the sick person should stay in a separate room with the door closed. Only one person or family member should care for the sick person. The person providing this care should be extra careful to wash their hands, clean surfaces, and clean objects the sick person uses or touches. When the sick person recovers, make sure to wash the bed sheets and clean the room thoroughly!

Explore: "Ask Probing Questions"

- ❖ How often do you wash your hands?
 - Do you wash them as soon as you arrive home?
 - Do you wash them before and after you eat?
 - Do you wash them before and after you provide care?
- ❖ What do you use to clean surfaces?
 - Do you use soap and water?
 - Do you use cleaning solution?
 - Do you use a towel or paper towel?
- ❖ Where would you have a member of the home recover if they became ill?
 - Is there more than one bedroom?
 - Is there another room that has a door and place for someone to rest?
- ❖ Who would provide care for a sick member of the home?

Act: "Identify Next Steps"

- ✓ Review the health of the members of the home. Discuss whether there is a member of the household who is at-risk for serious illness. Review ways to support the at-risk individual without risking their health.
- ✓ Remind the Caregiver of the importance of hand washing. Discuss how often and when hands should be washed. Review proper hand washing techniques.
- ✓ Discuss the importance of cleaning surfaces to reduce the germs and viruses in the home. Review surfaces a person or Caregiver touches throughout the day. Discuss

how the germs, bacteria, and viruses on these surfaces can get onto a person's hands or food. Discuss how unclean surfaces can make a person sick.

- ✓ Coach the Caregiver on the importance of self-care. Discuss how taking care of themselves first keeps them healthy. Remind the Caregiver of their health's impact on health and wellbeing of the household. Review different self-care strategies.
- ✓ Share and Review the Cleveland Clinic video, "Cleaning Up After Getting Knocked Down by Illness" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOtdVzuklxl&feature=youtu.be>)
- ✓ Share and Review the Seniorlink article, "General Recommendations for Healthy Households"
- ✓ Share and Review the CDC article, "General Recommendations for Healthy Households" (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-prevent-spread.html>)
- ✓ Share and Review the CDC website, "Coronavirus (COVID-19)" (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)
- ✓ Collaborate and/or Refer to primary care provider (as appropriate).
- ✓ Collaborate and/or Refer to urgent care (as appropriate).