

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS”

Infection Control – Better Safe Than Sorry Beware of Superbugs!

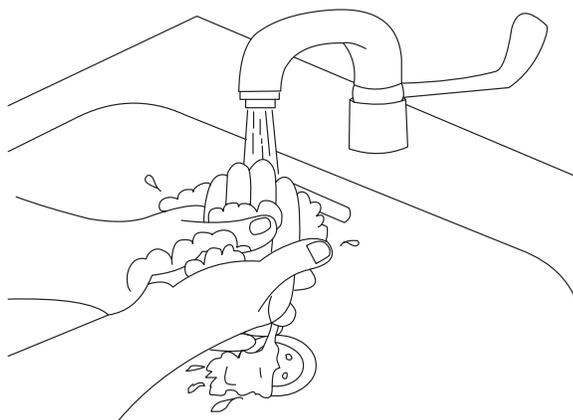
Germs are all around us. Even our own bodies normally harbor trillions of microorganisms. However, our immune system *and* a good balance of “good” and “bad” germs keep us from being ill, in spite of all the viruses, bacteria, fungi and other harmful substances around us.

Lately, however, a number of *superbugs* (microorganisms that have developed resistance to antibiotics) have emerged, which makes treatment difficult, especially for people who have a weakened immune systems. These include the **H1N1 virus**, a strain of influenza virus known to cause Swine flu, ***Clostridium difficile* (C. diff)**, a bacterium that causes severe diarrhea, and ***methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)**, which can lead to life-threatening infections. Although healthy people may be infected with these superbugs, some people are more likely to have *serious* complications, such as the elderly, surgery patients, people with HIV or other chronic diseases, and people living in nursing homes.

Beat superbugs by keeping them from invading our homes and institutions. Keep clean and safe by—

- Proper hand washing
- Cleaning our homes and surroundings
- Controlling the spread of infection

Source: World Health Organization, www.who.int; Centers for Disease Control, www.cdc.gov



Hand Washing: The Single *Best* Way to Fight Infection

Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the best way to fight infection.

Proper hand washing requires *rubbing* both hands with soap and water to break down the grease and dirt that carry germs. Fifteen to 30 seconds of thorough hand washing is all it takes to reduce germ count from your hands by 99%.

If clean water and soap are not available, use a **hand disinfectant** containing alcohol to clean your hands. Rub your hands together for about 15 seconds to ensure that the disinfectant covers them, including under the nails. You can air-dry your hands or use a disposable towel to dry them off, avoiding the use of reusable towels, which may be harboring germs.

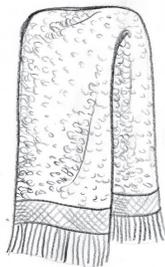
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Protect Your Home from Common Germs and Superbugs

November to April are the months when people tend to stay together in rooms where there is limited air circulation, causing more infections in this time of year. No wonder influenza and gastroenteritis are common, especially among school children, families and office workers. Microorganisms are often transmitted by direct contact, indirect contact, through food, and through the respiratory route. Germs can linger in the air after a person sneezes or coughs, others persist for days on various surfaces, while others contaminate your food.

- **Wash your hands** before handling food, whether you are preparing, serving, or eating.
- **Wash fruits and vegetables** thoroughly before cooking or eating.
- **Cook shellfish** thoroughly.
- **Use gloves when handling contaminated clothing**, towels and linens. Machine-wash them separately in hot water and machine-dry.
- **Wash bath towels** once a week, and hand towels every few days. However, if used by someone who is sick, wash after every



use. Kitchen towels must be washed separately from other towels or underwear.

- **Add 1/4 cup chlorine bleach** to your *whites* when you wash. If you are using a coin laundry, wipe the machine surface with a disinfectant before loading and add a disinfectant to the wash cycle.
- **Clean contaminated surfaces** with 10% bleach solution or any commercial bleach-based product, Lysol or hydrogen peroxide.
- **Steam-clean carpets** and upholstered furniture regularly.
- **Disinfect commonly held items with wipes**, such as telephones, TV remote, coffee tables, computer mouse, door knobs, etc. Use disinfectant wipes to clean shopping cart handles.
- **Vacuum crumbs away and clean up spills immediately** to prevent bacterial growth on carpets or furniture.
- **Scrub and disinfect the kitchen sink** with cleanser daily. Place your *wet* kitchen sponge in the microwave for two minutes daily to reduce bacterial contamination.



Stop the Spread

When cleaning, work from the cleanest to the dirtiest area and always wear gloves when giving personal care.



Taking Care of Yourself—Relax - You Deserve It!

Working without taking enough rest not only depletes your energy, but can also weaken your immune system and speed up the aging process. You need to relax because your body deserves to calm down and heal itself from all the physical, mental and emotional stress it handles every day.

Experts suggest that activating a major nerve that affects many areas of the body can promote immune function, reduce inflammation, prevent disease, and slow down aging. This nerve, called the **vagus nerve**, can be stimulated to induce stem cell regeneration and tissue renewal simply by relaxing and creating a positive brain state.

Here are a few tips to relax and strengthen your vagus nerve function:

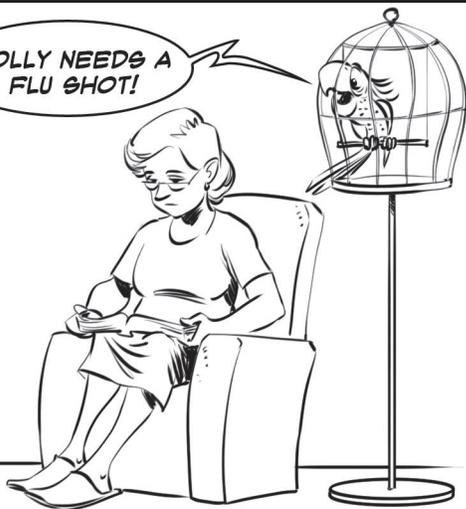
- Learn meditation techniques to relax your body and mind. Stretching exercises and yoga lessons can benefit your body, mind and soul.
- Get a soothing body massage.
- Enjoy nature. Walking in the park or doing deep-breathing exercises can help calm your nervous system and rejuvenate your body.



Source: Dr Mark Hyman; www.DrHyman.com

Live Life Laughing!

POLLY NEEDS A FLU SHOT!



Inspiration

Time heals all wounds,
unless you pick at them.

~Shawn Alexander,
American athlete

Don't Fall – Be Safe

Know your limits and look for signs of fatigue, such as catching your foot as you walk, so you know when you need to stop and rest.

The Comfort of Home®

Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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Caregiver Series

available from...

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SAFETY TIPS—Control the Spread of Infection

There are many ways people can spread infection: talking, coughing, sneezing, hugging, kissing, handling food, and using items others have touched are common ways microorganisms are transmitted. These bugs can persist for days or weeks on hard surfaces. You can infect *yourself* by touching your nose or mouth with contaminated hands.

To control the spread of infection, practice sanitary habits such as covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a clean handkerchief or tissue, and disposing of these properly. If you are taking care of a senior, consider using a face mask.

Wash your hands as often as necessary. Avoid sharing utensils, glasses, towels, or anything that may carry germs.

Take a rest and isolate yourself from others if you are sick and potentially infectious to give your body a chance to heal faster and to prevent others from catching your germs.



NEXT ISSUE... BETTER COMMUNICATION—LISTEN CAREFULLY