

2. Hygienic nose blowing, coughing and sneezing

Whether you are suffering from a common cold or a proper flu: Large quantities of germs are released into the air when coughing, sneezing and blowing the nose.

How can I prevent germs spreading?

- Avoid close contact with other people.
- Always cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. It is best to use a tissue. Alternatively, you can cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm, but never into your bare hands.
- Use a tissue to blow your nose and dispose of it straight away.
- Disinfect your hands after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth.



3. Hygiene after toilet use

Faecal bacteria cause serious disease if allowed to enter the body through an open wound or a catheter via contaminated hands.

The most effective measure to prevent transmission is thorough hand hygiene after each toilet use:

- Always wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet.
- If you are suffering from infectious diarrhoea, are receiving immunosuppressive therapy or have been found to have a resistant strain of bacteria, after washing them you should also disinfect your hands.

By following these procedures you can help prevent transmission:

- To prevent splashback place some toilet tissue in the toilet bowl.
- Put the toilet lid (if there is one) down before flushing.
- If need be, use toilet paper soaked in disinfectant hand rub to wipe off the seat.
- To prevent clogging only ever flush toilet paper down the toilet.

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How can I protect myself from germs?

Information for patients and visitors



Institute for Environmental Health Sciences
and Hospital Infection Control

This flyer offers information on how to protect yourself, your fellow patients and relatives from germs that cause disease.

Bacteria and viruses are ubiquitous in our environment. Some are harmless, while others may actually be beneficial, such as for digestion or the defensive functions of the skin.

However, many bacteria and viruses can cause serious disease. Patients in hospital, whose immune system may be weakened by their underlying disease or certain therapies, are particularly at risk. Germs may have multiple paths for entering the body. The frequent use of medical devices in modern health care, e.g. catheters, enables germs to gain access the body more easily.

The staff at our hospital performs all care giving duties, examinations and procedures in strict compliance with the specific hygiene standards and requirements.

You too can help prevent germs from spreading:

Protect yourself during your stay in the hospital (and in everyday life) by

- Hand hygiene
- Hygienic nose blowing, coughing and sneezing
- Hygiene after toilet use

Read more on the following pages.



1. Hand hygiene

Germs are most commonly spread through the hands. In hospital, this of course not only applies to the staff, but also to you as a patient or visitor. Germs pass to the hands either by direct contact with a person carrying the germ or from frequently touched surfaces.

Thorough hand hygiene protects you and others from germs! In the home environment, as a rule, washing your hands with soap and water suffices.

During your stay in hospital, we recommend hand disinfection as an additional hygiene measure.

All the patient rooms, restrooms as well as communal and entrance areas of the university hospital are equipped with disinfectant hand-rub dispensers.

When should I disinfect my hands?

As a patient:

- Before leaving and returning to your room
- Before and after using shared equipment
- Before meals (especially from the ward buffet)
- After blowing your nose/after contact with secretions from the airways

As a visitor:

- Upon entering the hospital
- Before leaving the patient's room
- After blowing your nose/after contact with secretions from the nose or mouth

How should I disinfect my hands?

- First remove any jewelry, otherwise the disinfectant won't work properly.
- Apply 2 to 3 squirts of disinfectant to your dry hands and rub thoroughly till dry.
- Don't forget your fingertips, the spaces between your fingers and your thumbs.

