

Preventing Infectious Diseases Fact Sheet

Keep immunizations up-to-date

- Follow recommended immunizations for children and adults.
- Remember pets need their shots too!

Wash your hands often, especially:

- After using the bathroom
- Before preparing food or eating
- After changing diapers
- After blowing your nose and/or using hands when sneezing or coughing
- After caring for a sick person
- After playing with or handling your pet

Prepare/handle food carefully

- Wash hands before and after handling foods.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold until eaten or cooked.
- Be sure temperature controls in refrigerators and freezers are working properly.
- Wash counters, cutting boards, and utensils with soap and hot water, especially after preparing eggs, poultry, or other meats. Use separate cutting boards for meat.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating.
- Cook meat, poultry, and eggs thoroughly. Using a meat thermometer is the best way to ensure that food is thoroughly cooked.
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible after meals.

Use antibiotics only for infections caused by bacteria

- Antibiotics are not useful in treating infections caused by viruses (for example, antibiotics will not shorten the course of a cold).
- Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed. Complete the full course of treatment.
- Never self-medicate with antibiotics or share them with family or friends.

Report to your doctor any rapidly worsening infection or any infection that does not get better after taking a course of antibiotics, if prescribed

Be careful around all wild animals and domestic animals unfamiliar to you

- After any animal bite, cleanse the wound with soap and water and seek immediate medical care.

Avoid insect bites

- Use insect repellants on skin and clothing when in areas where ticks or mosquitoes are common.
- If you have visited wooded or wilderness areas and become sick, tell your doctor all details in order to help diagnose both rare and common illnesses quickly.

Protect yourself by using safer sex practices and avoid sex with an injecting drug user

Stay alert to disease threats when you travel or visit underdeveloped countries

- Get all recommended traveler's immunizations.
- Use protective medications for travel, especially to areas with malaria.
- Don't drink untreated water, especially while hiking or camping.
- If you become ill when you return home, tell your doctor where you've been.

Develop healthy habits such as eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising, and avoiding tobacco and illegal drug use