Better Health Works®

Germs and Hygiene

There are many types of germs (viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi) that cause many types of illnesses, including the common cold, flu, most food-born illnesses, Lyme disease, hantavirus, plague, and others. These germs can spread easily from one person to another and have wide-reaching effects.

- Salmonella infections are responsible for an estimated 1.4 million illnesses each year.
- Infectious diseases cost the United States $120 billion a year.
- More than 160,000 people in the United States die yearly from an infectious disease.

Help keep yourself and your family healthy by making good hygiene a part of your permanent household routine.

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If clean, running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol to clean hands.

How do you use hand sanitizer?

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

— cdc.gov

Nurse Line

Nurse Line is a trusted source of information and support for a wide range of health concerns. Call **1.800.452.BLUE (2583)** toll-free, to speak with an experienced registered nurse. You can ask health questions, learn self-care tips, or get information that can help you choose appropriate care for your situation. Nurse Line is available 24 hours every day of the year.

Capital **BLUe** ✚

When should you wash your hands?

- Before eating.

- Before, during, and after handling or preparing food.

- After contact with blood or body fluids (like vomit, nasal secretions, or saliva).

- After changing a diaper.

- After you use the bathroom.

- After handling animals, their toys, leashes, or waste.

- After touching something that could be contaminated (such as a trash can, cleaning cloth, drain, or soil).

- Before dressing a wound, giving medicine, or inserting contact lenses.

- More often when someone in your home is sick.

- Whenever they look dirty.

How to wash your hands:

- Wet your hands and apply liquid, bar, or powder soap.

- Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.

- Continue for 20 seconds! It takes that long for the soap and scrubbing action to dislodge and remove stubborn germs. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" all the way through—twice!

- Rinse hands well under running water.

- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer.

- If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

— cdc.gov

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Good Hygiene at Home

Routinely Clean and Disinfect Surfaces

Cleaning and *disinfecting* are not the same thing. Cleaning removes germs from surfaces whereas disinfecting actually destroys them. Cleaning with soap and water to remove dirt and most of the germs is usually enough. But sometimes, you may want to disinfect for an extra level of protection from germs.

- While surfaces may *look* clean, many infectious germs may be lurking around. In some instances, germs can live on surfaces for hours and even days.

- Disinfectants are specifically registered with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and contain ingredients that actually *destroy* bacteria and other germs. Check the product label to make sure it says "disinfectant" and has an EPA registration number.

Disinfect areas where there can be large numbers of dangerous germs and where there is a possibility that these germs could be spread to others.

In the Kitchen:

- Clean and disinfect counters and other surfaces before, during, and after preparing food (especially meat and poultry).

- Follow all directions on the product label, which usually specifies letting the disinfectant stand for a few minutes.

- When cleaning surfaces, don't let germs hang around on cleaning cloths or towels! Use:

  — Paper towels that can be thrown away

  — Cloth towels that are later washed in hot water

In the Bathroom:

- Routinely clean and disinfect all surfaces.

This is especially important if someone in the house has a **stomach illness**, a **cold**, or the **flu**. Use:

- Disposable sanitizing wipes that both clean *and* disinfect.

— cdc.gov

Recipe Row

SPICY CARROTS AND SQUASH

Recipe Summary:
Prep time: 25 minutes
Number of servings: 4
Cups of fruits and vegetables: 1

Ingredients:
- 2 cups carrots, cut into 2-inch sticks
- 2 cups acorn or butternut squash, cut into 2-inch sticks
- 1 tsp vinegar
- 2 Tbsp vegetable broth, low-sodium
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- 1 ½ tsp Dijon or spicy mustard

Directions:
Wash, peel, and cut carrots. Wash and cut squash. Combine carrots and broth in saucepan. Cover and cook over medium heat about five minutes. Add squash and cook five more minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Add more broth if necessary to keep from burning. Stir vinegar, brown sugar, and mustard into vegetables. Cook for a few minutes over medium heat until most of the liquid cooks off. Serve.

Credit: Recipe adapted from the Connecticut Food Policy Council.

Nutrition Analysis per serving: Calories: 60 • % Calories from fat: 0
Total fat: 0 g • Cholesterol: 0 mg • Sodium: 70 mg
Total Carbohydrates: 15 g • Fiber: 3 g • Protein: 1 g

Courtesy of fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org

Capital BlueCross Condition Management Programs

Capital BlueCross Condition Management Programs are designed for individuals with asthma, coronary artery disease, diabetes, or heart failure.

By participating in the program, together you and your care manager will:

- Identify and prioritize your health care needs.
- Determine simple steps to activate a plan of action specific to your needs.
- Enhance your understanding of your condition.

- Improve discussions with your physician(s) and decision making about your health care.
- Capitalize on available condition and preventive health benefits and information.

Call **1.800.892.3033** to meet your care manager and begin your journey together, or take some time to learn more about our services by visiting our website at: **capbluecross.com/Providers/ClinicalPrograms**.

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N39-62 (11/13)