

Clean your hands often. Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled, otherwise it's okay to use an alcohol based hand gel. Important times to clean your hands are:

- After using the bathroom
- Before preparing or eating food
- After changing a diaper
- After blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing
- After caring for a sick person
- After touching an animal

Prevent spreading germs to others.

- Cover your mouth or nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Immediately put used tissue in the waste basket, then clean your hands.
- If a tissue isn't available, use your upper sleeve to cover your cough or sneeze .
- When you cough or sneeze into your hands, clean your hands immediately. Otherwise you will spread germs to everything and everyone you touch.
- Stay at home when you are sick. Going to work or school spreads germs to others and may prolong the duration of an illness. Avoid any unnecessary exposure to high-risk individuals, such as those in hospitals, nursing homes, or persons with compromised immune systems.

Keep immunizations up-to-date.

- Follow recommended immunization schedules for children and adults.
- Remember to get the influenza ("flu") shot every year.
- Also remember to keep your pets current on their immunizations.

Prepare/handle food safely.

- Wash hands before and after handling food.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold until cooked or eaten.
- Be sure temperature controls in refrigerators and freezers are working properly. Your refrigerator should be 40° F. or lower and your freezer should be 0° F. to prevent bacterial growth.
- Wash counters, cutting boards, and utensils well with soap and hot water, especially after preparing eggs, poultry, or other meats.
- Use a separate cutting board for raw meat products and ready-to-eat foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before slicing or eating.
- Cook meat, poultry, and eggs thoroughly. Using a meat thermometer is the best way to ensure that food is properly cooked. Poultry should be at least 165°, red meat should be at least 145° unless it is ground beef which should be 160° and not pink.
- Refrigerate leftovers as soon as possible after meals.

Care for your skin and wounds properly.

- Clean all wounds and surrounding skin with mild soap and gently rinse with water.
- Cover all wounds with a bandage and replace if it becomes loose, wet, or soaked with drainage.
- Contact your healthcare professionals if a wound does not heal, or if other symptoms occur.

Use antibiotics appropriately.

- Antibiotics only work for bacterial illnesses. Illnesses caused by viruses should be treated with over-the-counter medication to relieve symptoms (for example, antibiotics will not shorten the duration of a cold).
- When prescribed, follow the prescription exactly. Always finish the course of treatment, even if you feel better before you are finished with the prescription.
- Avoid taking old, unfinished antibiotics or sharing prescription medication with family or friends.
- Report to your doctor any illness that does not get better after taking a course of prescribed antibiotics.

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

- After any animal bite, cleanse the wound with soap and water and consult with a clinician for further evaluation.
- If you have been bitten, the biting animal will need to be evaluated for disease. Get as much information as you can about the animal. Your animal control officer or local law enforcement can help you. If you have to detain the animal yourself, be very careful to avoid further exposure.
- Enjoy wild animals with your eyes, not by touching them.

Prevent tick and mosquito bites.

- Use repellants on skin and clothing according to directions when you will be outside during warm weather.
- Limit your time outside during high risk times for mosquitoes, such as dusk and dawn.
- Wear light colored clothing to detect crawling insects before they attach.
- Check yourself for ticks as soon as possible after being in wooded or grassy areas.
- Remove ticks safely by using tweezers to pull straight out of the skin. Use of irritants such as a match or fingernail polish remover can cause the tick to expel disease-causing material into your body.
- After removing a tick, do not crush it. Crushing will release bacteria that can then infect you.
- If you become ill with fever 3–21 days after an insect bite or after being in a wooded or grassy area, contact your doctor. Provide the details about your recent activities and the recent tick/mosquito bite in order to help diagnose both rare and common illnesses more quickly.

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

- Get all recommended traveler's immunizations in plenty of time before your trip.
- Use recommended protective medications for travel. Some medications need to be started before you travel.
- Don't drink untreated water, especially while hiking or camping. Bring bottled water to avoid dehydration.
- If you become ill after you return home, tell your doctor where you've been.

Protect yourself from sexually transmitted diseases.

- Not having sex is the best way to avoid getting an STD.
- If you do have sex, use a latex condom. If you are allergic to latex, use a polyurethane condom.
- You can get an STD by having anal, oral or vaginal sex with an infected partner.
- Talk to your partner about past sex partners and about drug use using needles. If anything about your partner worries you, don't have sex!
- Know the signs and symptoms of STD. If you are at risk or if you have symptoms, get checked. Testing is available at your private doctor's office or at your local county health department.

Protect yourself from diseases transmitted through blood.

- Avoid participating in injection drug use. If you do inject drugs, never share needles.
- Avoid sharing personal care items, such as nail clippers, razors or toothbrushes.
- If you get a tattoo, be sure to get one from an OSDH licensed tattoo artist or establishment.
- Protect yourself from direct contact with blood by using personal protective equipment such as gloves when handling contaminated items.

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Acute Disease Service

Oklahoma State
Department of Health

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Acute Disease Service
Oklahoma State Department of Health
Phone (405) 271-4060
<http://ads.health.ok.gov>