

Cleaning utensils

Reusing cloths and other cleaning equipment, such as mops and sponges can spread germs around your home.

- Use disposable cloths and discard after use.
- Change sponges regularly.
- Wash reusable cloths and utensils (at or above 60°C), or disinfect them after use.
- After use clean mop heads, preferably by hot machine washing (at least 60°C), or by washing them in hot water and detergent, followed by soaking in a disinfectant and then dry with the head upright.

Toilets

You can pick up germs by touching surfaces that have been contaminated by splashes during flushing (e.g. the toilet seat). The flush handle is another hot spot for picking-up germs because people touch it before they wash their hands. You can reduce contamination by closing the lid before flushing the toilet and by cleaning and disinfecting the toilet and surrounding surfaces regularly. This is particularly important if someone in the home has sickness or diarrhoea. Always wash your hands after using or cleaning the toilet.

Cloths used for cleaning the toilet should not be used elsewhere.

Laundry

Laundering fabrics in a washing machine at high temperature (at least 60°C) will kill most germs. If you need to launder items at lower temperatures (check washing instructions), consider using a suitable laundry disinfectant to kill germs.

Wash heavily soiled items in a separate load.

Launder items used around food (e.g. tea towels) separately from clothing and bed linen.

Pets

Pets can carry germs on and in their bodies.

Provide pets with their own dishes and feeding utensils that you clean and disinfect regularly.

Do not allow pets onto food preparation surfaces.

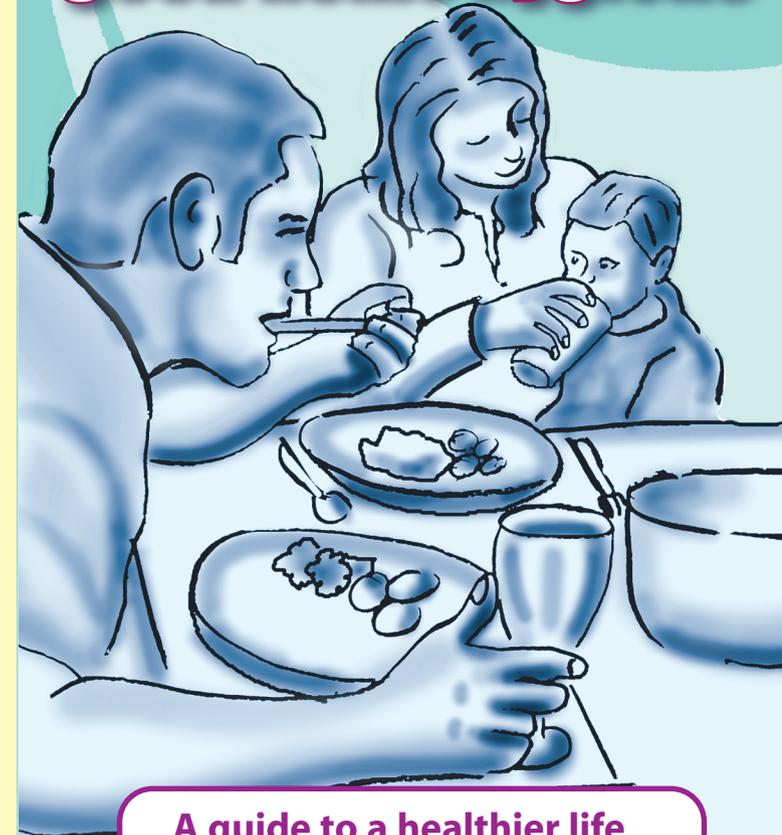
Wash your hands after touching animals or their equipment.

Other surfaces

Floors, furniture and walls usually have a low risk of spreading infection unless they are heavily contaminated (e.g. with vomit) when they need to be cleaned and disinfected immediately. If you have a crawling baby at home, the risk of them picking up an infection is higher (especially if you have pets) so clean and disinfect your floors frequently.

Germs like warmth, moisture and food debris. Keep things clean and dry – they won't like it.

Avoiding infections through good home hygiene



A guide to a healthier life for you and your family



South West London

Poor hygiene can make you ill

Although germs are all around us, many live in and on our bodies without causing us any harm. In fact, some germs, such as the bacteria in our gut, even help to keep us healthy. However, if certain germs get into the wrong place, such as into a cut or wound or into the food we eat, they can cause illness and infection.

Germs that cause infection can spread very easily around our home; one common route is via our hands. Every time we touch something, we can transfer germs via our hands to our own body, to other people we touch and to surfaces such as door handles, telephones and food preparation areas. From these surfaces germs can be transferred indirectly to others.

Germs such as bacteria quickly multiply in places that are warm and moist and where there is food waste or dirt.

Reduce the risk of infection to you and your family by following good hygiene practices.

Where germs are often found

- Hands
- Kitchen surfaces
- Food
- Waste bins
- Cleaning utensils
- Toilets
- Laundry
- Pets

How do we reduce the risk from germs?

Good home hygiene aims to remove or reduce the risk of harmful germs in our homes (e.g. by cleaning and disinfecting) and by reducing their spread by correct handwashing, for example before and after preparing food. Using the correct hygiene procedure ensures that items and surfaces are always hygienically clean.

Keeping things dry is an important part of good home hygiene. Germs cannot live for long on clean dry surfaces. However, a few germs left in a warm moist environment such as on dirty cleaning cloths can quickly multiply and become a health hazard.

Remember to clean dirty surfaces first and then disinfect.

Hands

Hands are the most common way that germs pass from one person to another. Therefore washing hands properly, particularly after going to the toilet and before handling food, helps to reduce the spread of germs around your home. Use liquid soap and warm water and dry your hands thoroughly on a clean dry towel or disposable paper towel.

Kitchen surfaces

Surfaces or objects that are often touched by hands (e.g. worktops, taps, refrigerator,

cupboard and door handles) are hotspots for the transfer of germs. These surfaces need to be cleaned regularly.

- Cleaning with hot water and soap or detergent will often remove germs from an object providing the surface can be rinsed thoroughly under running water. You may not be able to use this method to remove germs from fixed surfaces such as worktops or refrigerators, because you cannot rinse away the germs properly.
- Where surfaces cannot be rinsed properly use a suitable disinfectant after cleaning.

Food

Thorough cooking or boiling will destroy germs found in food and water. It is important to avoid transferring germs from raw food (e.g. raw meat and poultry) to ready-to-eat food (e.g. cooked meat, bread, fruit).

Use separate chopping boards and knives for raw and ready-to-eat food.

Wash your hands, clean and disinfect surfaces immediately after contact with raw food.

Store raw meat in sealed containers at the bottom of the fridge so that juices do not drip on other food.

Waste bins

Bins need to be emptied, cleaned and disinfected regularly. Use a bin with a lid to prevent access by pests (e.g. flies) and reduce odours. Use a foot-operated pedal bin to avoid hand contamination. Always wash your hands after emptying the bin.