

Disaster Relief

Prevent Infection in Community Shelters

Loss of sleep, increased stress, and eating different foods from what you are used to can contribute towards a weakened immune system. Then you are more susceptible to illness and infection.

Staff and shelter residents can help prevent the spread of infection and infectious diseases by following these tips:

1. Wash your hands and children's hands with warm, soapy water for at least 10 seconds. Be sure to clean under fingernails. If you don't have soap and clean water, you can use alcohol gels (hand sanitizers).
2. Keep your surroundings clean. Keep bathroom and kitchen surfaces clean to prevent infection.
3. Use good personal hygiene measures. Here are some examples:
 - Cover your mouth when you cough with tissues, throw the tissues away, and wash your hands.
 - Wash your hands before, during, and after preparing food.
 - Do not share eating utensils or drinking cups or bottles.
 - Do not share any personal articles, such as a tooth brush, wash cloth, comb, razor, hair brush, or cosmetic products such as mascara
 - Dispose of sharp articles, such as razors, any needles used for medication. Dispose of these in a hard, plastic, covered container.
 - Bathe regularly.
 - Wash clothing regularly, if possible.

Tips for good hand hygiene:

- Wash your hands before preparing food and before and after eating.
- Wash your hands after using the restroom.
- Wash your hands after cleaning up a child and after changing a diaper.
- Wash your hands before and after helping someone who is ill.
- Wash your hands after handling raw foods such as poultry, fish, or raw meat.
- Wash your hands after blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing.
- Wash your hands after petting an animal or handling animal waste.
- Wash your hands after handling garbage or any type of waste.
- Wash your hands before and after providing any type of first aid.

How to clean your living space and your personal items:

To reduce the spread of infection and disease, keep items clean.

- Sanitize (clean thoroughly) any surface that is likely to carry germs. (Use a product with a label that reads sanitizer or antibacterial, or mix 1 teaspoon of household bleach to 1 quart of water.) Sanitize any spilled body fluids. Use disposable gloves while cleaning. Sanitize surfaces used for food preparation. Sanitize diaper changing surfaces.
- Clean regularly:
 - * kitchens and bathrooms each day and as necessary.
 - * bed frames, mattresses, and pillows between occupants.
 - * furniture as needed.
 - * spills immediately.

- Wash clothing on a regular basis:
 - * Make sure donated clothing is washed before giving to others to wear.
 - * Remove any bulk solids, such as mud or stool, and flush solids before laundering.
 - * Wash clothing in a washing machine, if possible.
 - * Use laundry soap or household detergent.
 - * Dry clothes in a dryer, if possible.
- Provide regular trash removal, if possible:
 - * Use trash containers lined with plastic bags and secure tightly.
 - * Dispose of hazardous waste, such as needles, medical waste, and bandages as determined by the local authorities.