

Home Hygiene

Good home hygiene routines are important to help protect the whole family. Regular cleaning and appropriate disinfection of all surfaces that you frequently touch, such as door handles, taps, flushes, toilet seats, switches and bin lids can help to reduce the spread of germs around the home. You should also clean and disinfect kitchen work surfaces before preparing food. Once your baby starts using a high chair it is important to keep it clean. You can use an antibacterial cleanser, or wipes to kill bacteria that may be present.

Protecting Against Infection From Other People

Although you might be confident that you are following good hygiene practices, you should also make sure that visitors follow good hygiene practice too. Ask people who have an infection (such as a cold) not to visit in the early weeks or if they have had a tummy upset, not for 48 hours.

Immunisations

It is important that you visit your doctor to make sure that your baby is given the vaccinations they need to keep them safe.

Did you know?

Nearly half (43%) of respondents to a recent global survey believe that regularly cleaning and disinfecting a child's high chair is one of the most important steps to take in order to protect them from picking up germs and becoming ill²



Am I Cleaning Too Much?

As a new parent, the health and development of your baby is one of your key priorities, and the level of new information can be overwhelming, and some parents may worry that they are cleaning too much, or even too little...

The practice of increased hygiene such as hand washing and surface disinfection has been scientifically shown to reduce infection and decrease levels of illness and does not correlate with any increase in atopic (allergic) diseases.

The Hygiene Council would like to assure you that exposure to some microbes is an important step in the process of "natural immunisation" of your child. However, exposure to harmful pathogens that can cause serious infections is unnecessary and preventable by good hygiene habits.

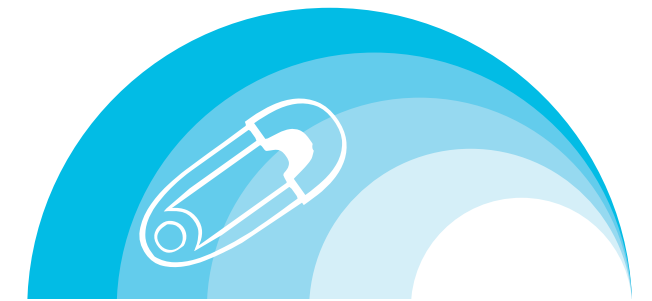


For more information on keeping your home hygienically clean, visit www.hygienecouncil.com

¹ World Health Organization. Available at: <http://www.who.int/en/> Last accessed April 2009.

² International Consumer Hygiene Attitudes and Behaviours Survey; Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS), March-May 2009

³ Gerba C et al. A model for assessing risk: preliminary findings for laundry [oral presentation]. Proceedings of Perspectives on Home Hygiene: Building a Rational Approach. Columbia University, New York; February 9, 1999.



Bringing Baby Home

Germ Protection: Bringing Baby Home



Babies are far more susceptible to infection than healthy adults because they are born with an immune system that is not yet fully developed. Although breastfeeding will help because breast milk is packed with antibodies, you still need to protect your baby from exposure to unwanted germs until their immunity has matured. You can help protect them by practicing good personal and home hygiene.



Here are some simple steps to help safeguard you and your family from unwanted infection at this special time.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to help prevent the spread of infection.¹ You should wash your hands with soap and water and dry them thoroughly in the following situations:

- Before and after preparing food or feeding your baby
- Always after using the toilet or changing your baby's nappy
- After any contact with blood or any bodily fluid (e.g. blood, faeces, vomit)
- After coughing/sneezing/wiping the noses of children
- After touching pets or animals
- Before and after giving any medication
- Whenever hands look dirty

Did you know?

A recent global survey found that nearly half (47%) of people worldwide believe that washing their hands regularly is the most effective way to help prevent the spread of germs in the home (second to surface disinfection)?

Nappy Changing

The risk of transferring germs to hands and surfaces during nappy changing is high.

To minimise the risk of contamination:

- Make sure that your waterproof changing mat is not dirty or torn
- It's useful to keep paper towels on the mat which can be thrown away afterwards to help facilitate cleaning
- After removing the soiled nappy, clean the baby's entire nappy area from front to back to help avoid infection
- Never leave your baby alone on a nappy changing station or other raised surface
- Never change a nappy on a food preparation or eating area
- Whether you are using disposable or reusable nappies, care of soiled nappies is important
- Disposable nappies should be folded to keep the soil inside and then be placed in a bag or nappy sack and disposed of in a special nappy bin
- Reusable nappies should be emptied into the toilet and then put into a nappy bucket to soak in disinfectant. The content of the nappy bucket should be put down the toilet and never down the sink, for hygiene reasons
- Clean and disinfect nappy changing mats and surrounding areas after use
- After changing a nappy wash your hands with soap and water, and dry well. When soap and water is not available, use a hand sanitizer



Laundry

- Soiled items including reusable nappies must be washed at 60°C or more in order to kill bacteria. If you choose to wash at a lower temperature, use a laundry disinfectant
- Heavily soiled items should be laundered separately
- Launder your baby's towels, clothes and bedding regularly
- Run your washing machine empty at a high temperature occasionally to prevent it becoming a reservoir for germs
- Wash your hands after handling laundry

Did you know?

An average washing machine load can contain 100 million *E. coli* at any one time.³



Baby Feeding Equipment

- Anything used to feed your baby should be sterilised – this includes all bottles, teats, beakers and breast pumps – and even dummies
- Prior to sterilisation, all equipment must be washed very thoroughly in hot soapy water, paying particular attention to any places where residues of milk might collect, then rinse thoroughly. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully when cleaning and sterilising baby equipment
- Wash your hands thoroughly after touching any of your baby's feeding equipment, especially if it has just been sterilised
- Ensure all sterilised equipment is placed and stored in areas that have been cleaned effectively