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Handwashing

Key messages for handwashing

- Hand hygiene is the most effective way to control the spread of infections (see separate hand washing guide).
- Hand hygiene is most effective when performed with warm running water, liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Hand washing removes dirt, bacteria, and viruses, stopping them spreading to other people and objects that people touch.
- Hand sanitiser can be used when hands are visibly clean.
- Hand sanitiser should not be used when there are symptoms of diarrhoea and vomiting.

Other important messages to share

- Hand washing should take 15-30 seconds.
- Paper towels are the most effective way to dry hands and remove bacteria.
- You should wash your hands after using the toilet, after handling raw foods like chicken, meat and vegetables, before eating or handling ready to eat food, after contact with animals including pets and after sneezing and coughing.
- Avoid common missed areas by washing in between the fingers, backs of the hands, fingertips and nails, around thumbs and wrists.

Why is it important?

It's especially important to make sure you wash your hands to help prevent the spread of infection, particularly when visiting someone vulnerable in hospital, a residential care setting, or their own home.

Self-help and local services

Find out more information about hand hygiene for all ages at:

- <https://healthydudley.co.uk/protect-your-health/infections/ways-of-preventing-infections/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

Get involved

Encourage children and others to have good hand hygiene.

Protect yourself and others by performing good hand hygiene.

Key messages for managing infections

- To reduce the risk of spreading an infectious disease an exclusion period should be observed during and after symptoms.
- If you feel unwell and / or have a temperature you should stay away from vulnerable people to reduce the risk of spreading the infection to them.
- Follow good respiratory hygiene measures, Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.

Other important messages to share

- If you are suffering with diarrhoea and / or vomiting, you should stay away from others until you have been without any symptoms for 48 hours.
- If you have a respiratory illness such as flu or Covid-19 you should stay away from others for at least 5 days, or until you feel well and no longer have a temperature.
- If you have Shingles, you should cover up affected areas if possible and avoid contact with others especially pregnant women and those who have not had chickenpox.
- Scabies is spread through skin-to-skin contact. If diagnosed with scabies you should avoid prolonged contact with others until 24 hours after the first treatment. People within your household or close contacts will also need to complete one round of treatment.

Self-help and local services

Find out more information about exclusion times for different infections in children and young people settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/children-and-young-people-settings-tools-and-resources>

The UK Health Security Agency has more information about infectious diseases and exclusion times: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities/managing-specific-infectious-diseases-a-to-z>

Get involved

Ensure people who are unwell have the support they need to stay away from others who are more vulnerable.

Help people understand the guidance and why following exclusion times is important in keeping others well and stopping the spread of infection.



Managing infections

