



There are five ways that infectious diseases are spread from one person to another. Each disease follows one of these modes of transmission. You can help prevent diseases by taking certain precautions.

Airborne: Fine moist particles are coughed or exhaled into the air by an infected person and inhaled into the body of a susceptible host

- Examples: Influenza (flu), chickenpox, mumps
- Prevention: sick person should cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash their hands frequently with soap and water. Others should avoid contact with the person during contagious periods.

Droplet (mucus and secretions): sneezing and coughing spread the droplets from the nose, mouth and throat; these germ-filled secretions fall on all surfaces. When someone touches these infected surfaces they contaminate their hands, and then infect themselves by touching their own mouth or nose.

- Examples: Tuberculosis (TB), colds
- Prevention: sick person should cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash their hands frequently with soap and water. Make sure to wash your hands with soap after touching items used by someone who is sick.

Direct Contact: germs are spread when an infected person touches someone or something and then a susceptible person in turn touches the same area. This includes objects like hats, combs, car seats, bed linens, and towels.

- Examples: pinkeye, ringworm, scabies, head lice, and pinworm
- Prevention: Limit contact with the skin or belongings of an individual. Wash your hands immediately after contact with the infected person's skin or belongings

Fecal-oral: very small particles of germs from feces contaminate the hands of sick individuals after bowel movements. Items touched by these people become contaminated (toilet handles, water faucets, door knobs, food). Someone touching these same items or eating food prepared by infected people can themselves become infected and pass on the disease

- Examples: Hepatitis A, giardia, shigellosis, salmonella
- Prevention: Clean potentially infected surfaces with a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water (made fresh daily). Wash your hands after using the bathroom and immediately before preparing food. People with diarrhea should not prepare food.

Blood-borne/body fluids: germs carried in blood and other body fluids get into the body of another person. Some methods of transmission are needle and razor sharing, unprotected sex, and splashed bodily fluids onto cuts or mucus membranes (eyes, mouth)

- Examples: Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV
- Prevention: Assume that all body fluids are infectious and avoid contact (wear latex gloves when in contact with fluids, use condoms or barriers during sexual intercourse). Clean potentially infected surfaces with a solution of 1 part bleach to 10 parts water (made fresh daily). Never share needles, razors, or toothbrushes.

If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 257-1017