

# Infection Prevention at Home

Microbes – viruses, bacteria, fungi, and parasites – are all around us. Most are safe, but you can get an infection if they get inside your body. Anyone can get an infection, but some people are at higher risk than others. People who get home care are at a higher risk for infection due to their medical conditions and needs.

## Risk Factors

- Being very young or old
- Recovering from childbirth, surgery, or dental procedures
- Having an invasive device like a urinary catheter or IV
- Having one or more chronic illness, like diabetes or COPD
- Having a weakened immune system from diseases, treatments, or not having a spleen
- Not being able to move around
- Not eating enough healthy food, being malnourished
- Living in a crowded space
- Being around other people who have an infection
- Smoking

## Infection Prevention at Home

People get care in their home for many reasons. Home care patients may see fewer people in their home, but the patient is still at risk for infection.

### Infection prevention tips:

- Wash your hands often, especially before touching the person you are caring for and any open wounds.
- Wash your hands before putting on disposable gloves.
- Ask visitors to wash their hands.
- Make sure to do dressing changes in a clean space.
- If the person you are caring for is incontinent (having no control of bladder or bowel movements) be sure to change their undergarments regularly.
- If the person you are caring for cannot move, be sure to move their positioning often.
- Check skin regularly for redness, sores, or breaks in skin. Report to nurse if you find any concerns.
- Encourage a healthy diet.
- Ask about appropriate vaccines, like for flu, pneumonia, and COVID-19.
- Have the person you are caring for move around as much as possible.
- Make sure they take all medications, including antibiotics, for the length of time prescribed.
- Do not share personal items like towels, razors, and toothbrushes, as they can spread germs.

**You can't prevent all infections, but you can try to help minimize the risk.**

**Know the risks and learn more about infections at [Sepsis.org](https://www.sepsis.org).**

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