



# An Ounce of Prevention Keeps the Germs Away

Many infectious diseases can be prevented by following seven simple and inexpensive steps.

## WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Wash your hands often to eliminate germs that you have picked up from people, surfaces, and animals. Always wash your hands before, during, and after you prepare food; before you eat; and after you use the bathroom. Also, wash hands after handling animals or animal waste, and wash them more often when someone in your home is sick. The proper way to wash your hands is to wet them first, apply soap, then rub and scrub them vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds. Rinse and dry.



## ROUTINELY CLEAN AND DISINFECT SURFACES

Cleaning and disinfecting are not the same. Cleaning with soap and water, and scrubbing removes dirt and most germs. Disinfecting with a bleach solution or another disinfectant kills additional germs on surfaces, providing an extra margin of safety.



## AVOID CONTACT WITH WILD ANIMALS

Wild animals can carry diseases harmful to you and your pets. Wild animals such as rodents can carry deadly diseases such as hantavirus and plague. Ticks can transmit Rocky Mountain spotted fever and ehrlichiosis. Bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes can transmit rabies. Keep your house free of wild animals by not leaving any food around and by eliminating possible nesting sites. Seal entrance holes on the inside and outside of your house.



## KEEP PETS HEALTHY

Pets should be adopted from an animal shelter or purchased from a reputable pet store or breeder. All pets should be routinely cared for by a veterinarian. Follow the prescribed schedule of immunizations that the vet recommends.



## GET IMMUNIZED

Getting immunizations is easy, inexpensive, and saves lives. Make sure your children get the shots recommended by their health care



provider at the proper time. Keep records of all immunizations for the whole family. Children should get their first immunizations before they are 2 months of age. They should return for additional doses 4 or more times before their second birthday. Ask your health care provider about special programs that provide free shots for your child. Adults need tetanus and diphtheria boosters repeated every 10 years. Shots are often needed for protection from infectious diseases when traveling to other countries.

## USE ANTIBIOTICS APPROPRIATELY

Antibiotics are powerful drugs used to treat certain bacterial infections. Antibiotics don't work against viruses such as colds and flu. Unnecessary antibiotics can be harmful and, if used inappropriately, can cause bacteria to become resistant to treatment. Antibiotics should be taken exactly as prescribed by your health care provider. Your child does not need an antibiotic each time he or she is sick.



## HANDLE AND PREPARE FOOD SAFELY

- Plan carefully when purchasing your food. Buy perishable foods, such as dairy products or fresh meat, at the end of your shopping trip. Refrigerate these items as soon as possible.
- Store food properly. Don't allow juices from meat, seafood, poultry, or eggs, to drip on other foods. Use containers to keep these products from contaminating other foods. Don't leave perishable food out for more than 2 hours.
- Use care when preparing and cooking food. Wash your hands and clean and disinfect all kitchen surfaces and utensils before, during, and after handling, cooking, and serving food. Wash raw fruits and vegetables. Avoid eating raw eggs or partially cooked eggs. Cook all poultry and meat until the juices run clear. Use different dishes and utensils for raw foods and cooked foods. Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.
- Store leftovers properly. Avoid leaving leftovers out for more than 2 hours. Promptly refrigerate or freeze perishable items.

