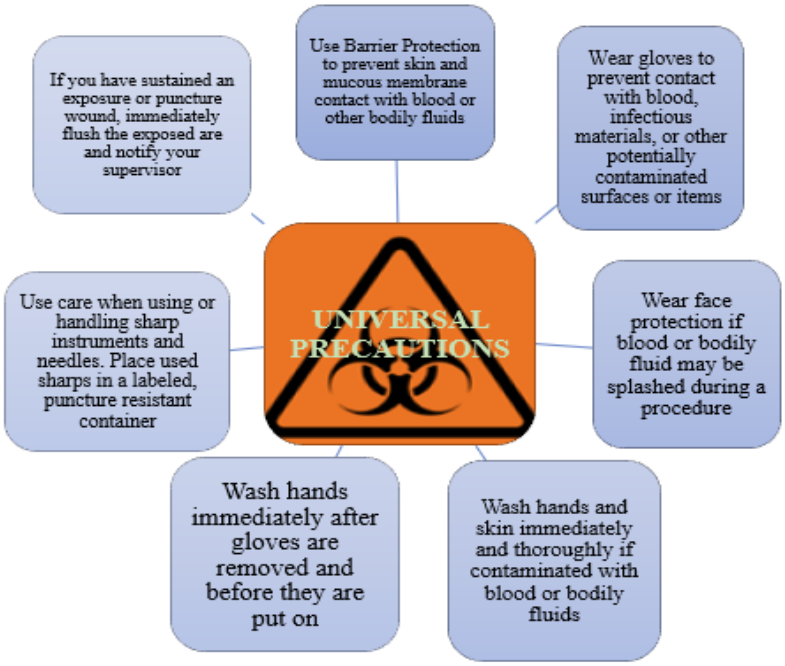
UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Most approaches to infection control are based on the concept of "***Universal Precautions***", treating all blood and bodily fluids as if they were potentially infectious. Remember that there are many people who carry infectious disease that have no visible symptoms and no knowledge of their condition. Using Universal Precautions resolves this uncertainty by requiring you to treat all human blood and bodily fluids as if they were known to be infected with HIV, HBV, HCV or other blood borne pathogens or other pathogens (germs).



Personal Hygiene

Here are some controls based on personal hygiene that you *must* follow to decrease your risk of exposure. **Do not** eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics, lip balm or handle contact lenses where there is a reasonable likeliness of exposure to contaminated area or bodily fluids. **Minimize** splashing, spraying, spattering and generation of droplets in the air when attending to an injured co-worker or client. **Do not** keep food and drinks in refrigerators, freezers, shelves, cabinets or on countertops where blood or other potential infectious materials are present. Ensure you practice proper hygiene etiquette, wear clean clothes, fingernails are trimmed and clean, good oral hygiene practice, and ensure your clothing is clean.

Handwashing

The most important practice in any infection control and prevention of infection is *Hand Hygiene*. Good hand hygiene keeps you from transferring germs from your hands to other parts of your body or other surfaces you may touch. You *should* wash your hands with nonabrasive soap and running water every time you remove your gloves or assisted with an activity to your client. If your skin or mucous membranes come in direct contact with blood or other bodily fluids, wash or flush the area with water immediately and notify your supervisor. If your hands are not visibly soiled, you may use a hand sanitizer. Use these as a temporary measure *only*. You must still wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you can and avoid touching your face.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

The type of PPE appropriate for your job, varies with the task and the degree of exposure you anticipate. Equipment that protects you from contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials may include gloves, masks, gowns, face shields, googles, and/or resuscitation mouthpiece. PPE must be appropriate for the task and fit properly to protect you from blood borne pathogens or other infectious germs. You must use appropriate PPE each time you perform a task with potentially infectious material. PPE is considered appropriate if it doesn't permit blood or other potentially infectious material to pass through or reach clothing, skin, eyes, mouth or other mucous membranes under normal conditions of use. ***Gloves are the most commonly used PPE***. Gloves are made of latex, nitrile, rubber or other water impervious materials. You can use gloves during cleaning, assisting a client with an activity such as hygiene care, or cooking. If you know you have cuts or sores on your hands, you should cover these with a bandage or similar protection as an additional precaution before putting on your gloves. And *always* ensure to perform hand hygiene before putting on gloves and once they are removed.

Glove Removal

Gloves ***should*** be removed when they become contaminated or damaged, or immediately after finishing the task. You must follow a safe procedure for glove removal, being careful not to contaminate your hands.

- With body hands gloved, peel one glove off from top to bottom and hold it in the gloved hand.
- The exposed hand, peel the second glove from the inside, tucking the first gloves inside the second.
- Dispose of the entire bundle promptly in the trash.
- Never touch the outside of the glove with bare skin
- Every time you put on or remove gloves, perform proper **hand hygiene**.

Googles and Face Shields

Anytime there is a risk of splashing or vaporization of contaminated fluids; googles, face shields or other protection should be used to protect your face. Splashing could occur while cleaning up a spill or while providing first aid or medical assistance.

Aprons/Cover Gowns

Aprons/gowns may be worn to protect your clothing and to keep blood or other contaminated fluids from soaking through to your skin. Normal clothing that becomes contaminated with blood should be removed as soon as possible because fluids can seep through the cloth and come into contact with skin.

BLOOD BORNE PATHOGENS (BBP)

Blood borne pathogens are microorganisms such as viruses or bacteria that are carried in blood and other bodily fluids and can causes disease in people. These pathogens (germs) include, but are not limited to: Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Hepatitis C Virus (HCV); Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

Hepatitis B (HBV)

"Hepatitis" means "inflammation of the liver", and thus Hepatitis B is a virus that infects the liver and causes inflammation. There is no "cure" or a specific treatment for HBV, but many people who contract the disease will develop antibodies, which help them get over the infection and protect them from getting it again. It is important to note, however, that there are different kinds of hepatitis, so infection with HBV will **not** stop someone from getting another type.

The Hepatitis B virus is very durable as it can survive in dried blood for up to *seven days*. For this reason, this virus is the primary concerns for ***all*** employees such as housekeeping, custodians, laundry personnel, caregivers, and other employees who may come in contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials in a non-first aid or medical care situation.

Symptoms of Hepatitis B (HBV): like a mild "flu". As the disease continues to develop, jaundice (yellow skin and eye whites) and darkened urine will often occur. After exposure, it can take 1-9 months before symptoms become noticeable.

HEPATITIS B VACCINE

Luckly, ***all*** employees who have routine or possible exposure to blood borne pathogens (ex.: nurses, first aid responders, social workers, custodians, caregivers, nursing aids, those who perform medical procedures and laundry personnel) shall be offered the Hepatitis B vaccine series at **no** cost to themselves unless:

- They have previously received the vaccine series
- Antibody testing has revealed they are immune
- The vaccine is contaminated for medical reasons

The series consists of 3 vaccinations given over a 6-month period of time. Although your employer at European Services offers the vaccine to you and recommended locations where it can be administered, you **do not** have to accept the vaccine. You may opt to decline the vaccination series; in which case you will be asked to sign a "**Declination Form**". Even if you decline the initial offer, you may choose to receive the series at any time during your employment thereafter, for example, if you are exposed on the job at a later date. If the vaccine is administered immediately after exposure, it is extremely effective at preventing the disease. If exposure is suspected, wash the area and notify your supervisor who will direct you to contact our **Works Comp** for you to go to immediate care for further treatment. There is **no** danger of contracting the disease from getting the vaccine, and once vaccinated, a person does not need to receive the series again.

Hepatitis C (HCV)

Hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection is the *most common chronic blood borne infection* in the United States. Most people with this virus are chronically (permanently) infected and might not be aware of their infection because they are not clinically ill (no symptoms at first). HCV is transmitted primarily

through exposures to blood. Risk factors include blood transfusion or blood exposure on open skin, injecting drug use, exposure from a sex partner or household member who has had a history of hepatitis.

Symptoms of Hepatitis C (HCV): many have no symptoms prior to developing liver cirrhosis (damage). The present symptoms are usually mild fatigue, poor appetite, joint and body aches, nausea, and mild abdominal discomfort.

Human Immunodeficient Virus (HIV)

A virus called the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, eventually leads to acquired immune deficiency syndrome or AIDS. Once a person has been infected with HIV, it may take many years before AIDS actually develops or have any symptoms. HIV attacks the body's immune system, weakening it so that it cannot fight other deadly diseases or germs. AIDS is a fatal disease stage where immune system is so compromised the individual cannot fight off any disease or infection and usually succumbs to an infection. While there is treatment available and individuals may lead a normal life for a very long time, the treatments are still improving, however - there ***is no cure***. The HIV virus is very fragile and **cannot** survive for very long outside the host (human body). It is primarily of concerns to employees providing first aid in situations involving fresh blood or other potential infectious materials. Because it is such a devastating disease, **all** precautions **must** be taken to avoid exposure.

Symptoms of HIV: symptoms can vary, but often include weakness, fever, sore throat, nausea, headache, diarrhea, a white coating on the tongue, weight loss, and swollen lymph nodes.

Modes of Transmission

BBP such as HBV, HCV and HIV can be transmitted through contact with infected blood other potential infectious bodily fluids such as: semen, vaginal secretions, saliva (in dental procedures), and any body fluids that is contaminated with blood. It is important to know how exposure and transmission are *most* likely to occur in your job duties. HBV and HIV are most commonly transmitted through:

- Sexual contact
- Sharing of hypodermic needles
- From mothers to their babies at/before birth
- Accidental puncture from contaminated needles, broken glass, or other sharps
- Contact between broken or damaged skin and infected body fluids
- Contact between mucous membranes and infected body fluids

Anytime there is a blood-to-blood contact with infected blood or bodily fluids, there is a slight potential for transmission. *Unbroken skin forms the best barrier against blood born pathogens*. However, infected blood can enter your system through: open sores, cuts, abrasions, acne, or any damaged or broken skin such as sunburns or blisters. Blood borne pathogens may also be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth. For example, a splash of contaminated blood to your eyes, nose or mouth could result in transmission and consequently lead to an infection.

Reducing your risk

Reducing your risk of exposure to blood borne pathogens means you *need* to do more than wear gloves. To protect yourself effectively use:

- Work practice controls
- Personal protective equipment
- Housekeeping
- Hepatitis B vaccine
- Engineering Controls

Engineering controls are mechanical systems that are in place to minimize hazards at the source. Their effectiveness usually depends on you and using them appropriately. Examples of engineering controls are sharps containers, red biohazard bags, and isolyzer.

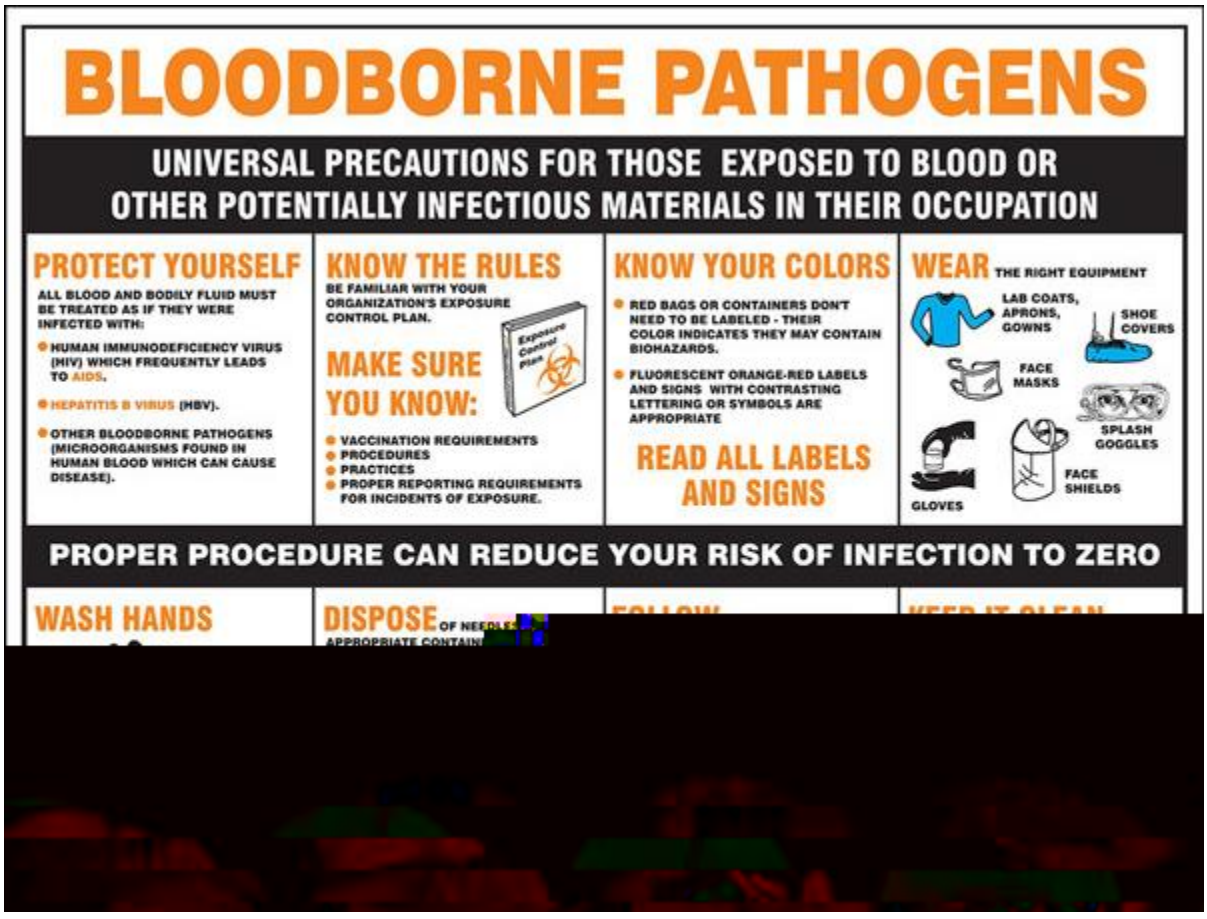
- Sharp container is puncture resistant, leak proof containers used for disposal of contaminated broken glass, needles and lancets.
- Red biohazard bags are used for disposal of bloody waste material such as dressings. Bloody materials need to be placed in a biohazard bag if the blood is dripping, pouring, squeezable or flaking from the contaminated material. If I t does not meet one of these requirements, it can be disposed in the standard wastebasket t.
- Isolyzer is a power that concerts liquid contaminated waste into treated solid waste. The waste then can be scooped and placed in a biohazard container.

Biohazard Sign

A biohazard symbol is a florescent orange-red symbol marked **BIOHAZARD**. This symbol is the universal symbol for biohazardous materials. This symbol warns you that the container holds blood or other potentially infectious material.

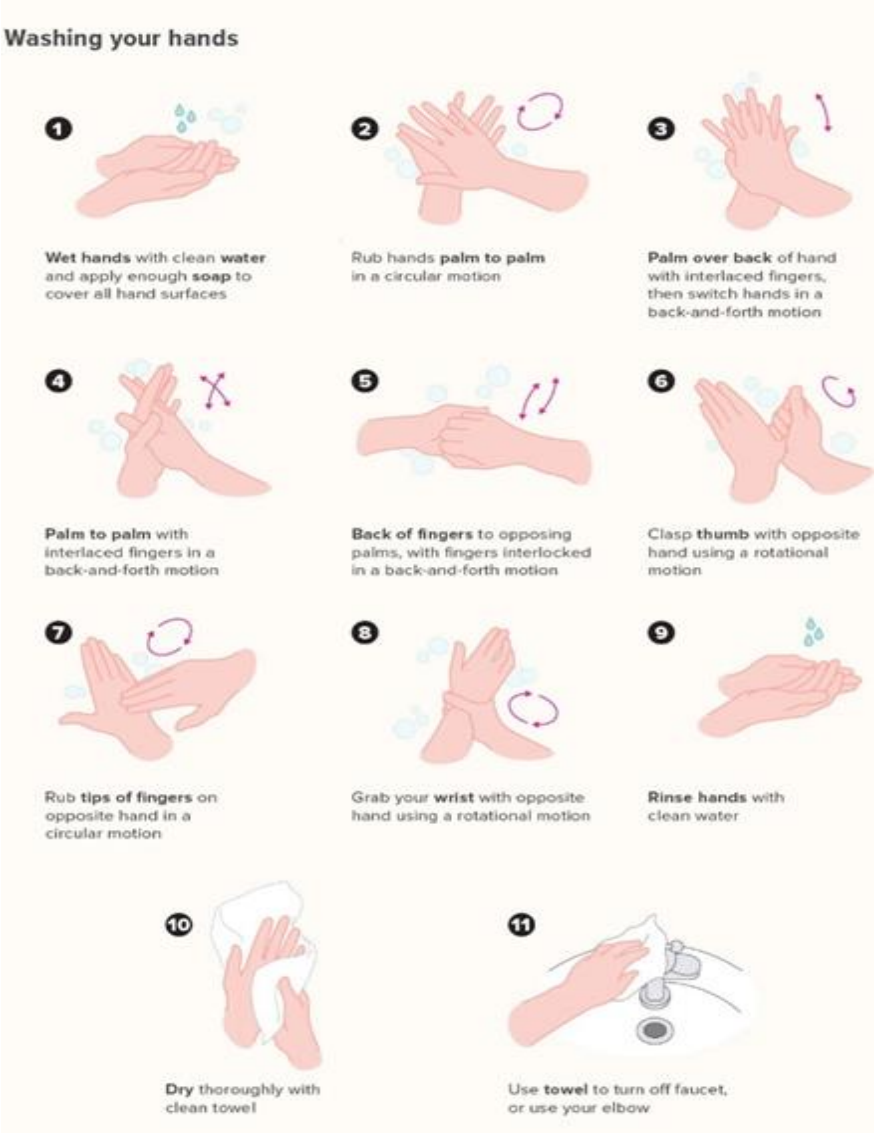
Work Practice Controls

Work practice controls are specific procedures you *must* follow on the job to reduce your exposure to blood or other potentially infectious material. These practices would include the use of universal precautions, personal hygiene and hand washing.



Here are Some Tips on When it Will be Absolutely Necessary to Wash Your Hands

- After and before contact with a client.
- Before and after situations in which your hands are likely to be contaminated (bathroom breaks, etc.)
- After touching contaminated items.
- Before putting on gloves and after removing gloves.
- Whenever you are preparing food.
- If a client has pets, wash hands frequently.
- If someone in your family is sick.
- After sneezing or coughing, even if you use a tissue.
- When you arrive to see your client and once again when you leave.
- Anytime you think it may be a good idea.



Keep Your Bathroom Clean

- Provide soap.
- Change towels and washcloths frequently.
- Change toothbrushes often, at least every 3 months, and store them separately in a clean, dry place.
- Clean and disinfect all surfaces, including the toilet, floor, tub, shower, and sink.
- Commercial sanitizers, such as Lysol, can be used on every surface in the bathroom, except mirrors.
- Review the directions of products you are using on how long the product needs to stay on the surface before being wiped off to ensure proper disinfection of the area - some may need 2 minutes while diluted bleach needs 10 minutes.
- **Never** combine bleach with another cleaner as toxic fumes may cause injury to your lungs.
- Whenever you clean with chemicals, make sure the room is well ventilated.
- If making natural cleaning products, follow FDA recommendations, such as 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach with 1 quart of water – remember **do not** store the "leftovers" and dispose of them properly.
- **Do not** share personal items, such as razors, toothbrushes, deodorant, combs, brushes, towels, and washcloths.

Maintain Hygiene in the Kitchen

- *Wash your hands before and after preparing food and before you eat*.
- Clean the inside of the refrigerator each week. Dispose of spoiled food.
- Keep your refrigerator set at 40°F (4°C) or less, and set your freezer at 0°F (–18°C) or less.
- Keep work surfaces clean. Disinfect them regularly.
- Wash your dishes in hot, soapy water. Air-dry your dishes or use a dishwasher.
- **Do not** share dishes or eating utensils.

Handle Food Safely

- *Wash hands with soap and water and surfaces frequently.*
- Wash hands immediately after handling raw meat or poultry, and after opening their packages.
- Raw meat, chicken or fish does not need to be washed before cooking. Doing so may result in surface bacteria being spread to the sink and around the kitchen.
- Store food carefully and in proper containers with lid.
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly, within 2 hours, and in covered containers.

- Throw out stale, rotten, molded or spoiled food.
- Thaw foods in the refrigerator or microwave, not at room temperature. If needs to thaw something quickly – instead soak in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes.
- Serve foods at the proper temperature. **Do not** eat raw meat or ground beef that is still pink inside. Make sure it is cooked to the appropriate temperature. Cook eggs until they are firm.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water before consuming them.
- **Do not** cross-contaminate. Use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils for raw foods and cooked foods. Separate raw meats from other foods in the fridge of during grocery shopping.
- Use a clean spoon each time you sample food while cooking.

Do Laundry the Right Way

- Wear gloves if laundry is visibly soiled.
- **Do not** shake soiled laundry. Doing that may send germs into the air.
- Wash laundry in hot water with detergent. **Do not** overload the washing machine.
- Remove laundry promptly after washing to prevent moisture build up (prevent mold and mildew).
- It is best to wash heavily soiled items separately from the other load of laundry. Items that may be stained by bodily fluids or feces (sheets, undergarments, etc.) needs to be wash as last load.
- Run the washing machine empty with a cup of bleach and cold water after heavily soiled items.
- If notice bad smells, try washing an empty load with hot water with a mix of ½ cup of baking soda and 2 cups of vinegar.
- If you cannot wash the laundry right away, place it in a plastic bag and wash it later

Be Careful Around Animals and Pets

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before and after touching animals.
- Avoid rough playing with pets to prevent scratches and bites.

- If you have a pet, ensure that your pet stays clean. **Do not** let people with weak immune systems touch bird droppings, fish tank water, pet bedding, dog droppings, or a litter box.
  - If you have a pet cage or litter box, be sure to clean it every day.
  - Ensure to **ALWAYS** wash hands afterwords.
- If you are sick, stay away from animals and have someone else care for them if possible.
- Animals can track in dirt, mold and even fleas from outside.
- Be extra cautions around reptiles, baby chicks, ducklings, puppies and kittens – they are more likely to spread infection.
- If a suspicion of rodents, ants or roaches' infestation – tell your supervisor **IMMEDIATELY**. Any pest's infestation is **dangerous**, especially for the elderly and people with respiratory problems.

HOW TO CLEAN AND DISINFECT OBJECTS AND SURFACES

Precautions

- Some disinfectants work for certain germs and not others. Read the manufacturer's instructions or read online resources to determine if the product you are using will work for the germs you are trying to remove and the length it needs to stay on the surface to be effective.
- If you choose to use bleach, use it safely. **Never** mix it with other cleaning products, especially those that contain ammonia. This mixture can create a dangerous gas that may be deadly.

- Keep proper movement of fresh air in your home and good ventilation.
- Pour used mop water down the utility sink or toilet. **Do not** pour this water down the kitchen sink.
- ***Always wash your hands afterwords and before working with food.***
- If using natural disinfectants, ensure to follow CDC guidelines and recommendations.

Objects and Surfaces

- If surfaces are visibly soiled, clean them first with soap and water before disinfecting. You may use dish soap as it works great in removing dirt and loosening up the grime and grease. The scrubbing motion helps to loosen up and remove soiled surfaces. Ensure to wipe clean and dry afterwords and perform hand hygiene.
- Disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched every day. This may include:

  - Countertops
  - Tables
  - Doorknobs
  - Chairs
  - Sinks and Faucets
  - Electronics, such as:
    - Phones
    - Remote Controls
    - Keyboards and Mouse
    - Computers and Tablets

Cleaning Supplies

Some cleaning supplies can breed germs if not taken care of properly. Take good care of them to prevent germs from spreading. To do this:

- Soak toilet brushes, mops, and sponges in bleach and water for 5 minutes after each use, or according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Wash reusable cleaning cloths and sanitize sponges after **each** use with hot water and detergent, or may add liquid bleach.
- Throw away disposable gloves after **one** use.
- Replace reusable utility gloves if they are cracked or torn or if they start to peel.

ADDITIONAL ACTIONS IF YOU ARE SICK

If You Live With Other People:

- **Avoid** close contact with those around you. Stay at least 3 ft (1 m) away from others, if possible.
- Use a separate bathroom, if possible.
- If possible, sleep in a separate bedroom or in a separate bed to prevent infecting other household members.
  - R Change bedroom linens each week or whenever they are soiled.
- Have *everyone* in the household *wash hands often* with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

In General:

- Stay home except to get medical care. Call ahead before visiting your health care provider.
- Ask others to get groceries and household supplies and to refill prescriptions for you.
- Avoid public areas. Try not to take public transportation.
- If you can, wear a mask if you need to go out of the house, or if you are in close contact with someone who is not sick.
- Avoid visitors until you have completely recovered, or until you have no signs and symptoms of infection.
- Avoid preparing food or providing care for others. If you must prepare food or provide care for others, wear a mask and wash your hands before and after doing these things.
- Always perform proper hand hygiene.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Nonpharmaceutical Interventions: cdc.gov

SUMMARY

- It is important to know how to keep infection from spreading.
- Make sure everyone washes their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – including scrubbing and under the fingernails.
- Disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched every day.
- If you are sick, stay home except to get medical care.
- ***Always perform proper hand hygiene to prevent the spread of infection!***