

# Patient Infections

Avoiding contagious diseases like the common cold, strep throat, and the flu is important to everyone. Here are four easy things you can do to fight the spread of infection.

## Clean your hands.

Clean your hands before touching or eating food, after you use the bathroom, take out the trash, change a diaper, visit someone who is ill or play with a pet.

- Use soap and warm water. Rub your hands, palms, fingernails, in between your fingers, and backs of your hands for at least 25 seconds.
- If your hands do not look dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## Make sure healthcare providers clean their hands or wear gloves.

Doctors, nurses, dentists and other healthcare providers come into contact with lots of bacteria and viruses. So before they treat you, ask them if they've cleaned their hands. Don't be afraid to ask your provider if they should be wearing gloves.

## Cover your mouth and nose.

Since germs can travel three feet or more, many diseases are spread through sneezes and coughs. Cover your mouth and nose to prevent the spread of infection to others.

- Use a tissue—keep them handy at home, at work, and in your pocket. Also make sure to throw away used tissues and clean your hands after use.
- If you don't have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose with the bend of your elbow or hands. If you use your hands, clean them right away.

## If you are sick, avoid close contact with others.

- Stay away from other people or stay home.
- Don't shake hands or touch others.
- If you're entering any Monroe Clinic location, please pick up a mask upon arrival.