

Four important steps!

The best ways to make sure your loved ones and other residents don't get sick is to:

- Stay home when you're sick (this is the most important one!)
- Cover your coughs and sneezes – properly!
- Wash your hands regularly
- Get your flu shot

Can I visit if I'm only a little bit sick?

If we get a cold or flu-like virus, we're usually sick for a couple days, maybe a week if it's the flu – and then we're okay again.

Seniors do not have as good immune systems as we do, so if they catch the flu or another virus, it can lead to serious health problems, even hospitalization, and in some cases death.

That's why it's so important not to visit when you're sick — even if you think you're "just a little bit" sick. A minor sickness to you may be a very dangerous one to them!



With influenza (the flu), it's possible to spread the flu virus for an entire day before you even feel sick. That's why we recommend getting the flu vaccination – you'll protect yourself, your family, and your loved ones.

VISITORS – REMEMBER:

Please do not visit if you have a fever, cough, diarrhea, nausea, and/or vomiting, or are feeling unwell. Help keep those germs away!

Also:

- Follow instructions on signs.
- Ask about any special visiting instructions.
- Be understanding – the person you are visiting may be in good health, but others here may be in poor health, so it's important to keep germs away from everyone.

By following the simple steps in this brochure, you can help prevent the spread of germs to residents, staff, volunteers, and visitors. Thank you!

The four steps:



For more information, visit www.picnet.ca.

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PROVINCIAL INFECTION CONTROL
NETWORK OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

A program of the Provincial Health Services Authority

Infection Control Information for Visitors

to residential care facilities

Simple ways to protect your loved ones from influenza, norovirus, and other common infections



Cover your cough – it's how germs travel!

Many infections, such as the common cold and the flu, are spread when people don't cover their cough or sneeze.



When a sick person coughs or sneezes, droplets spray out of their nose and mouth, and these droplets are full of germs. If another person breathes in these droplets, they can get sick. Some of the droplets land on surfaces, and if people touch these surfaces and then touch their mouth, nose, or eyes, the germs have found another way to get in. That's why you must cover your cough or sneeze when you're sick!



You can cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or use your sleeve. You should never cough or sneeze into your hand, but if you do, make sure you clean your hands with soap and water or sanitizer immediately after.

If you cough or sneeze into a throw the tissue into the garbage right away, and clean your hands after (as germs can get through the tissue to your hands).

Wash your hands so germs can't hitch a ride!

Another way germs like to travel is by hitching a ride on our hands. As we go through our day, we touch all kinds of things that other people have touched: door handles, bus seats, coins, elevator buttons... which means that we are constantly getting germs on our hands.



Every time you wash your hands or clean them with hand sanitizer, you remove or kill those germs. Washing your hands regularly is the best form of infection prevention.

Sanitizer kills germs

Cleaning your hands is easy! The fastest way is with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), also known as sanitizer.

- Apply a loonie-sized amount to your hands
- Rub all areas of your hands: palms, fingers, fingernails, thumbs, in between the fingers, and the backs of your hands.
- It should take about 15 seconds of rubbing for the sanitizer to dry; if it takes less time, you need to use more sanitizer.



Remember, sanitizer is safe and effective, and it does not build resistance in germs. It's a quick, easy, way to kill those germs – and you can carry a bottle of it in your pocket or handbag, which you can't do with a sink!

Soap and water when hands are dirty

If your hands are visibly dirty, then you need to wash with soap and water, because sanitizer won't remove dirt. To wash your hands:



Wet your hands



Apply soap



Rub hands and fingers...



...for
15
seconds!



Rinse



Dry

Hand cleaning stops the spread of germs!

Clean your hands often and clean them well, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.

When you visit, you can also help your loved ones to wash their hands.