PREPARE FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Infectious Disease Emergencies
Everyday the San Francisco Department of Public Health monitors and responds to cases of infectious diseases. Outbreaks can and do occur. It is important for you and your family to be prepared. Add the items listed below to your emergency kit so you can be ready for an infectious disease emergency.

Food and Water
- 1-2 month supply of non-perishable food
- 1 week supply of water

Medicines
- 1-2 month supply of prescription medicines
- 2 month supply of fever medicines (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen)

Hygiene and Home Care
- First aid kit
- Critical papers including lists of medical conditions, medicines, allergies
- Thermometer (non-mercury)
- Tissues
- Soap
- Disinfectant wipes (with at least 60% alcohol content)
- Bleach (unscented)
- Face masks (that cover nose and mouth)
- Gloves
- Plastic bags for discarding contaminated items

Learn More
To stay informed and learn more about specific infectious diseases, healthy habits, and preparedness, visit our website:

www.InfectMeNot.org
Wash Hands Often
Avoid Touching Wild Animals
Stay Home When Sick
Don't Share Personal Items
Get Vaccinated
Clean & Disinfect
Cough & Sneeze Into Your Sleeve
Handle & Prepare Food Safely

Protect Yourself with Healthy Habits
Although most germs, or microorganisms, are not harmful, some can cause infectious diseases. You probably already know about many infectious diseases. There are vaccines to prevent some and medicines to treat others, but we don’t have vaccines and medicines for every kind of infectious disease. It is important to know about germs and infectious diseases, and simple ways to avoid getting and spreading them.

Germs have their own personalities. They have favorite places to live, preferred ways to travel, and, if they are harmful, their own unique ways of causing disease. Germs can live in or on:

- dirt
- water
- countertops
- our skin
- our intestines
- and in many other places around us.

Germs can live in or on:

- hot areas of the world
- cold areas

What are germs and where do they live?

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Staying healthy—protect yourself with healthy habits

- Wash Hands Often
  - Our hands can carry germs, so it is important to wash them often, even if they don’t look dirty. Wash before and after cooking, eating, changing diapers, and handling money. Also wash after using the bathroom, coughing, sneezing, handling garbage, and touching another person’s hands, nose, or mouth. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If your hands look dirty, you can use hand sanitizer.

- Cover Your Cough & Sneeze
  - If you are sick, be courteous to others by covering your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Someone close by can breathe in your germs, or touch a surface contaminated with your germs, and become sick. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve—never into your hands. Remember to throw away the tissue and wash your hands.

- Get Vaccinated
  - Vaccines can prevent many infectious diseases. You should get some vaccines in childhood, some as an adult, and some for special situations like pregnancy and travel. Make sure you and your family are up-to-date by talking to your doctor.

- Stay Home When Sick
  - When you are sick, stay home and rest. You will get well sooner, and will not spread germs.

Clean & Disinfect Commonly Used Surfaces

- Germs can live on surfaces. Choosing with soap and water is usually enough. However, you should disinfect your bathroom and kitchen regularly. (Follow other rules if someone in the house is ill. You can use an EPA registered disinfectant.) Disinfecting surfaces can be done using the label, bleach solution, or rubbing alcohol.

- Don’t Share Personal Items
  - Avoid sharing personal items that can’t be disinfected, like toothbrushes and razors, or sharing towels between washes. Needles should never be shared; they should only be used once, and then thrown away properly.

- Handle & Prepare Food Safely
  - Food can carry germs. Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces. When preparing any food, especially raw meats. Always wash fruits and vegetables. Cook and keep foods at proper temperatures. Don’t leave food out—refrigerate promptly.

- Avoid Touching Wild Animals
  - You and your pets should avoid touching wild animals, which can carry germs that cause infectious diseases. If you are bitten, talk to your doctor. Make sure that your pet’s vaccinations are up-to-date.

Some germs can survive on their own while others prefer living in people or animals. Some germs live only in hot areas of the world, while others live only in cold areas. When germs find a place that is good for them, they multiply and set up a home for themselves.
**How do germs spread?**

Germs are tiny microorganisms that are all around us and are invisible to the human eye. There are many different types of germs. Most are not harmful, but some cause disease.

Germs spread in different ways. To catch an infectious disease, you first need to be exposed to a harmful germ. Then it needs to get on or into your body and act in its unique ways to cause disease.

Our bodies are good at fighting infections; not everybody who is exposed to germs will get sick, but some will. Here are the most common ways to be exposed:

- **Touching.** Some germs live in body fluids like mucus, pus, and stool. Even the invisible drops released when people talk, cough, or sneeze can carry germs. Touching a contaminated surface or object, then touching your eyes, nose, mouth, a cut, or other opening in the body, can lead to an infectious disease.

- **Eating or drinking.** Some germs exist in food and untreated water. Unwashed fruits and vegetables, and foods not properly cooked or kept at the right temperature, may carry harmful germs.

- **Breathing.** Some germs spread through the air. When someone coughs, sneezes, or talks, harmful germs are released into the air. When harmful germs are inhaled, they can lead to an infectious disease.

- **Getting bitten.** Animals can carry and spread infectious diseases to people. Bites from wild animals, pets, or even a small animal like a bat or insect can cause illness. Even if the animal doesn’t look sick, it may carry harmful germs.

Infectious diseases are also spread through sexual contact, during pregnancy from a mother to an unborn child, from sharing needles, blood transfusions, and through other ways.