

Stop the Spread of Germs: Always Cover Your Cough

Why should I cover my mouth and nose with a tissue when I cough or sneeze?

Germs such as influenza, cold viruses, and even whooping cough are spread by coughing or sneezing. When you cough or sneeze on your hands, your hands carry and spread these germs. When you touch an object such as a door handle, subway pole, telephone or computer keyboard with unclean hands, you are spreading germs. The next person who touches these objects may pick up germs and get sick if they do not clean their hands before touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

How do I stop the spread of germs if I am sick?

To stop the spread of germs:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in the garbage. Clean your hands with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm, not into your hands.
- Keep your distance (more than 1 metre / 3 feet) from people.
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Don't share eating utensils (e.g., cups or straws), toothbrushes or towels.

How can I stay healthy?

- Keep your hands clean. Clean your hands with soap and warm water. When hands are not visibly soiled, you can use a minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Minimize touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when you touch something that is contaminated with germs and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.
- Keep your distance (more than 1 meter / 3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.
- Get your flu shot (influenza vaccine) every year.
- Practice good health habits - eat healthy foods, get regular exercise, and get enough rest.

Where can I get more information?

Call Toronto Health Connection: 416-338-7600; TTY: 416-392-0658; or visit our website at www.toronto.ca/health.