

FLU SHOTS ARE AT A PREMIUM FLU SEASON IS COMING WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

Standard Practice is to make sure that people with disabilities have an opportunity to get flu shots, but if they are not available – what is your next step?

YOUR MOTHER WAS RIGHT – WASH YOUR HANDS!!!

Besides the flu vaccine, hand washing is cited as being the single most preventative step you can take to protect yourself and others from the flu.



The return of the cold and flu season is a good time to review with everyone the need to wash their hands OFTEN, including the hands of those you support!



What happens if you do not wash your hands frequently?

You pick up germs from other sources and then you infect yourself and the persons you support when you:

- Touch your eyes
- Or your nose
- Or your mouth.

Recent studies show that if **YOU, THE SUPPORT PERSON**, wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rubs between caring for different individuals and throughout the day; it will reduce the transmission of bacteria or germs... in some settings up to as much as 85%!

So here are the facts:

- Improved hand washing and the use of alcohol-based hand rubs has been shown to actually END outbreaks of infection and reduce overall infection rates.
- Use a soap that agrees with your skin – liquid or foaming soaps in pump bottle are better than bars of soap.

- Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on the skin, are fast-acting and cause less skin irritation than many soaps. Allergies are very uncommon.
- Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces.
- You should wash your hands for the length of time it takes you to sing “Happy Birthday.”
- The use of gloves DOES NOT eliminate the need for hand washing, and hand washing does not eliminate the need for gloves. Gloves reduce hand contamination by 70-80% and soap or alcohol rubs do the rest!
- Nails should be kept short (less than ¼” long) and artificial nails avoided, especially if you are supporting individuals at high risk for acquiring infections.

**REMEMBER, THE INFECTION YOU PREVENT
MAY BE YOUR OWN!**



When should you wash your hands?

You should wash your hands often. Probably more often than you do now because you can't see germs with the naked eye or smell them, so you do not really know where they are hiding. It is especially important to wash your hands:

- Before, during, and after you prepare food;
- Before you eat, and after you use the bathroom;
- After touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth;
- After handling animals or animal waste;
- When your hands are dirty, and
 - More frequently when someone in your home is sick.



Washing your hands regularly can certainly save a lot on medical bills. Because it costs less than a penny, you could say that this penny's worth of prevention can save you a \$50 visit to the doctor.

**REMINDEACH OTHER EVERY DAY ~ FREQUENT
HAND WASHING IS SO EASY TO FORGET!**