

Taking Care of People with Acute Respiratory Illness at Home

It is important for family to remain healthy while providing care to those ill with “colds,” influenza-like-illnesses and any other acute respiratory illness. Care providers should follow these simple steps:

1. Frequently wash your hands with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand rub. You should always clean your hands before and after caring for an ill family member, and after touching possibly contaminated objects or surfaces (eg. used tissues).
2. Keep surfaces clean around those who are ill. There is no need to sterilize your home or articles that the ill family member has used (eating and drinking utensils, frequently touched surfaces). A regular household cleaner is sufficient.
3. Dispose of soiled tissues into the green bin or garbage. Don't leave soiled tissues lying around the home to contaminate other surfaces or be picked up by toddlers in the home.
4. Don't share any objects that may touch the mouth or nose of the ill person — this includes, for instance, drinking glasses, eating utensils, toothbrushes, face cloths and towels.
5. If possible, have the ill person stay in a different room than other people. When in the same room, the sick person should stay 6 feet away from others as much as possible. If the ill person can wear a mask when other people are less than 6 feet away, this will also help to prevent spread.
6. Get enough rest. Caregivers must also get enough sleep and have their bodies rested and refreshed each day.
7. Follow Canada's Food and Nutrition guide. Getting the necessary vitamins and the right balance of nutrients helps immune systems perform at peak levels.