

IT'S GOOD FOR YOU, CONNECTICUT.

Get the facts.

Here's what you, your friends, and family members can do to help prevent infection:

The single most important thing you can do to prevent infection: wash your hands with soap. Hand sanitizers are also very effective.

It's the most well-known, least expensive, most efficient way to reduce the spread of infection, and yet recent studies show in some cases only half of Americans wash their hands before leaving a public restroom. Wash your hands. And don't be afraid to ask others to wash their hands before coming into contact with you, before and after preparing food, and after using the restroom.

Practice respiratory etiquette, and ask others to do the same.

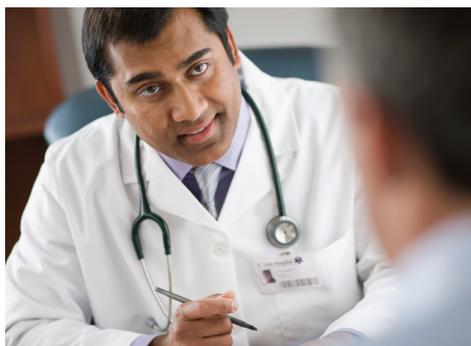
Your sneeze propels about 5,000 bacteria or virus-filled droplets into the air, and they can travel several feet. Coughing and sneezing into your hands transfers those germs to everything you touch, even if you use a tissue. Turn away from others and sneeze or cough into your sleeve.

If you're prescribed antibiotics, finish the entire course, even if you're feeling better.

When you have a bacterial infection, you will usually feel better within a few days of starting antibiotics. But if you don't finish the medicine, you can create a harmful strain of bacteria. These organisms can make you and others sick, and they may be resistant to the drug you were taking. Don't save your antibiotics or share them with others, since different bacteria respond to different medicines. If you have questions or want to stop taking your medicine, check with your doctor first.

Advocate for yourself, and enlist the help of friends and family members when possible.

The best healthcare is a working partnership between providers, patients, and their families. Let people know if you'd like visitors, or if you'd prefer some privacy



while you recover. Ask people to sit on a chair instead of your bed, to wash their hands carefully before and after touching you, and to refrain from visiting if they are not feeling well.

A study conducted at the University of Texas showed that people remember about 10% of what they hear. If you bring a friend to a doctor's appointment, you can concentrate on what's being said while someone else takes notes and asks follow-up questions.

If you're going in for surgery or any type of procedure, ask about pre-surgical instructions.

If your doctor has given you a special soap to use before your surgery, use it according to the instructions. It will help prevent infections and other complications.

In most cases you shouldn't shave. Read the instructions carefully ahead of time. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to call. If for some reason you are unable to follow the instructions or have any difficulties, please tell your healthcare provider right away.

Check your vaccination status, and ask your doctor about any that are not up-to-date.

Vaccines can protect you and your loved ones from serious illnesses. Make sure everyone in your household — children and adults — are current. If not, check with your doctor about timing. Some vaccines may need to be done right away, depending on your specific circumstances. Flu shots are also an important way to reduce the chance of illness.

For more information, contact your healthcare provider or visit our website: www.ct.gov/dph