

# HOW TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF FLU

*The common cold virus and the flu virus are both spread in two ways—through the air and by direct contact:*

1. Cold and flu viruses travel in **droplets**. So, they can spread up to six feet through the air (from one person to another) when someone sneezes or coughs without covering his or her face.
2. Both viruses can also spread through **direct contact** with germs. For example, if someone with a cold or the flu wipes his nose and then touches a doorknob, the next person to touch the doorknob is at risk for picking up that germ.

*So, during flu season, you can safely assume the germs are in the air and on everything you touch! It's a bit extreme, but it will help you to remember to take all of the following precautions to prevent the spread of the flu!*

- **Practice Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette.** This precaution requires that anyone (staff, clients, visitors, family members) with a cough or cold symptoms **cover their noses and mouths** with a tissue or the inside of the elbow when coughing or sneezing. All tissues must be properly disposed of after one use.
  - Be sure to make tissues and waste baskets conveniently available to yourself and others during cold and flu season.
- **Wash your hands.** Washing your hands often will help protect you and your clients from the flu. (Encourage your clients to wash their hands, too.)
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Your eyes, nose, and mouth are the are the easiest places for germs to enter your body.
- **Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.** Doorknobs, telephones, sink handles, light switches, keyboards, and tabletops in public spaces are popular hangouts for germs! Studies have shown that flu viruses can survive for up to eight hours on these types of surfaces.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** You are younger, stronger, and healthier than the clients you care for. If you are sick, stay home! It's not fair to expose your weaker, immune-compromised clients to your germs.



## CONNECT IT!

### REMEMBER YOUR PRECAUTIONS!

*What precautions should you follow to keep yourself and your clients safe during a flu outbreak? (check all that apply)*

- A. Contact precautions
- B. Droplet Precautions
- C. Airborne precautions
- D. Extended Airborne Precautions
- E. Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette.
- F. Standard Precautions

*List the steps you would take to follow flu precautions.*

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**Answer:** A, B, E and F. Gown and gloves with client and in client's environment. Mask within three feet of a client with the flu. Wash hands before and after all interactions with clients. Cough into tissue or elbow.