

Droplet and Contact Precautions Fact Sheet

What are Droplet Precautions?

Germs are spread by large droplets that are produced when a person coughs or sneezes. These droplets travel a short distance through the air and settle in the eyes, nose or mouth of another person. Droplets can travel 2 metres (6 feet) or less in distance and can settle on surfaces. This is called droplet transmission.

Droplet Precautions help stop the spread of germs carried by droplet transmission.

What are Contact Precautions?

Germs can be spread directly by physical contact after touching a person, such as shaking hands, or indirectly after touching items in a room, such as clothing or equipment. This is called contact transmission.

Contact Precautions help stop the spread of germs from one person to another by direct or indirect contact.

What procedures are used for Droplet and Contact Precautions?

- Within a health care facility, the client may be given a private room. The door can be kept open. If the client is not placed in a private room, the curtain may be drawn around the bed
- A sign will be placed on the door or cubicle curtain to let everyone know the special precautions required
- Staff will wear facial protection (masks and eye protection) when they are within 2 metres (6 feet) of the client
- Staff will wear gloves and long-sleeved gowns when they have contact with the client or objects in the room or home
- The client should be out of the room or home for medically essential purposes only
- Before entering or leaving the room or home, all staff, clients and visitors should perform hand hygiene using hand sanitizer or using soap and water (if hands are visibly dirty)



What can clients do to help?

- When in a health care facility, stay in the room unless staff has approved leaving the room. If leaving the room, follow these directions:
 - ◆ Put on a mask before leaving the room or home and keep it on at times
 - ◆ Clean hands with hand sanitizer when leaving or returning to the room
 - ◆ Wear clean clothes (e.g. housecoat, gown, etc.)
 - ◆ Clean hands often when out of the room or home
- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, and throw the tissue away in a wastebasket
- Perform hand hygiene using hand sanitizer or use soap and water (if hands are visibly dirty):
 - ◆ Before leaving the room or home
 - ◆ After blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing
 - ◆ After going to the bathroom
 - ◆ Before and after eating

What can visitors do to help?

- When visiting a health care facility, read the sign on the door and speak to staff before entering the room. Staff will tell visitors if gloves, gowns and facial protection (masks and eye protection) are necessary while in the room
- Perform hand hygiene using hand sanitizer or use soap and water (if hands are visibly dirty)
 - ◆ When entering or leaving the room or home
 - ◆ Before putting on gloves, gown and facial protection (if required)
- Visitors should be limited to family members or close friends

Ask the nurse if there are any questions