

Infection Prevention & Control in the Community

Infection prevention and control guidelines are important to protect all members of the community from transmission of infection. This is particularly important for people with CF who are at greater risk of more serious consequences as a result of infection.

Transmission of Germs

Bacteria and viruses are examples of microorganisms that cause infection. Transmission of microorganisms can occur a number of ways including:

- **Direct contact** with someone who is infected.
- **Indirect contact** with a surface or object that has been contaminated.
- **Droplet transmission** from direct contact with a person who is coughing or sneezing.
- **Airborne transmission** where microorganisms are carried by dust particles and can remain suspended in the air for a long time.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

Different microorganisms thrive in different environments but there are a number of common things we can all do to help stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases and protect people with CF. These include:

- Washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and drying



thoroughly or using alcohol-based hand wash if hands are not visibly soiled.

- Avoid touching your face eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Coughing or sneezing into your elbow or a tissue, disposing of tissues in a closed bin and performing hand hygiene.
- Keep up to date with age related [immunisations](#) and following seasonal immunisation recommendations like the annual flu vaccination. Encourage family to have their immunisations too.
- Avoid people who are unwell.
- Communicate with your family, friends, social/school contacts and workmates to ensure they are aware of the risk they pose to you if they attend gatherings/workplace/school etc. when they are unwell.

Outbreak of Infectious Disease

In the event of a widespread outbreak of an infectious disease such as the flu or COVID-19, it is important to follow the advice from the health department. You should also listen to the information provided by your CF clinical team to make the best decisions for you and your family. In these cases some extra precautions may be recommended including:

- Avoid unnecessary direct contact with other people, for example, hand shaking and kissing.
- Regularly disinfect surfaces such as tables, benches and door handles.
- Avoid high risk environments such as shopping centres, gyms and public transport wherever possible or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser while out in public.
- Consider working from home if possible.
- Avoid large gatherings of people or crowds at large events.
- Limit sharing of equipment.

It is normal for people with CF and their families to feel worried about exposure to infection, particularly during a widespread outbreak. There are some things you can do to help manage your emotional wellbeing including:

- Accessing accurate clear information from reliable sources.
- Maintaining regular contact with your support network on email, social media or phone.
- Keep exercising! You might have to modify your routine, but exercise will help keep you mentally and physically healthy.
- Try to maintain a good routine of sleeping, eating, working and relaxing.

Useful Resources

- [CFWA Factsheets](#)
- [Hand Hygiene Australia](#)
- [Department of Health Australia](#)

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