



Health and Welfare Alert

Infection Control

Direct support professionals (DSPs) have a critical role in providing services to Ohioans with developmental disabilities, and controlling infection is an important aspect of keeping both the provider and person healthy.

Infection-causing germs are mostly spread through direct contact with skin or other contaminated surfaces. Infections can lead to serious illnesses that can be fatal. Proper hygiene and awareness can reduce the risk of illness.

Prevention

Avoid contact with bodily fluid. Wash hands promptly with soap and water if contact occurs, and wear gloves before contact when possible.

Sing "Happy Birthday" twice while washing hands with soap and water as a timer to ensure hands are completely clean.

Prevent the spread of infection by using proper cough etiquette. Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the crook of your elbow, and wash your hands after doing so.

Be aware of surfaces that can easily pass infection between people: doorknobs, walkers, wheelchairs, keyboards, elevator buttons, handrails, phones, and pens. Sanitize these surfaces regularly with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registered disinfectants.

Practice physical distancing (also known as "social distancing") by standing 6 feet away from people to avoid passing germs.

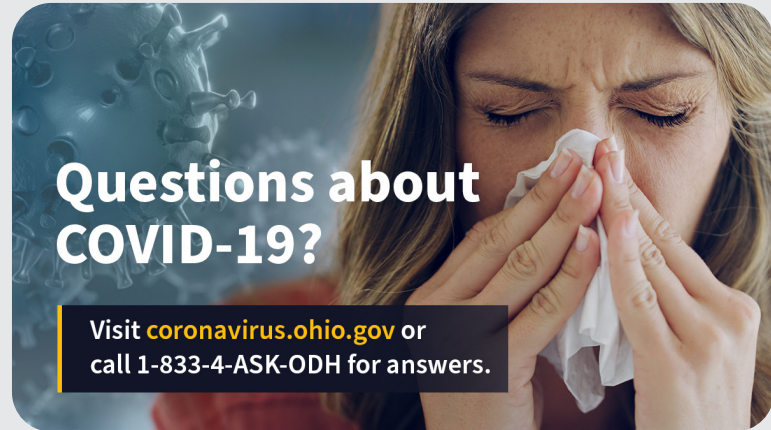
Know the symptoms of different infections, and take proper precautions to avoid spreading illness. Reach out to a medical professional for advice if necessary.

Sepsis

Sepsis is a serious complication of infection that damages organs and can lead to death. Contact a medical professional immediately if symptoms present. Symptoms include fever, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, fast heart rate, and mental confusion.

Soap vs. Sanitizer

Hand sanitizer is not a substitute for proper handwashing with soap and water. Sanitizers may be used in addition to handwashing or if soap and water is not available. Sanitizers can reduce the number of germs present, but it does not eliminate all germs present. Not all germs are deactivated by sanitizer.



Coronavirus Prevention

COVID-19, or coronavirus disease 2019, is an upper respiratory tract disease caused by one of the seven coronaviruses known to infect humans.

Learn more from the Ohio Department of Health at coronavirus.ohio.gov. Visit [DODD's website](#) for detailed and up-to-date information for DSPs.

Symptoms

Symptoms, which generally appear two to 14 days after exposure, include fever, cough, and difficulty breathing. Most people who become sick do not require hospitalization, but older adults, people with chronic health conditions, and people with compromised immune systems are more likely to require more advanced care.

Preventative Measures

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Call before visiting your doctor.
- Clean and disinfect "high touch" surfaces often.