

Hygiene advice: intestinal infection

Patient information

You have been or may have been infected by a bacterium, a virus or another microorganism which can be passed on to other people. You should follow the hygiene advice provided below to prevent passing on the infection to others:

- **Wash your hands thoroughly after visiting the toilet, before handling foods and before meals.** Use liquid soap and your own towel or single-use towels.
- **Keep the toilet and washbasin clean.** You can also disinfect hands and surfaces using an alcohol-based disinfectant which can be purchased at pharmacies without a prescription.
- If possible, you should use a **toilet of your own** while the diarrhoea/vomiting continues.
- **If you have children in nappies** who are suffering from an intestinal infection, place used nappies in plastic bags which are then discarded with the rest of your refuse. **Wash your hands** thoroughly after changing nappies. **Clean the changing table** after use. You can also use disinfectant for this (see above).
- **Do not go swimming** until you are completely free of symptoms.
- **Machine-wash any soiled laundry**

When you are suffering from an intestinal infection, there is a major risk of passing on this infection if food is contaminated. Therefore, avoid handling any food which is to be eaten by others. If you have to handle food, take extra care when washing your hands before picking up the food.

Stay at home from preschool, school or work when you have symptoms such as diarrhoea and/or vomiting, and for at least 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. This is particularly important if you:

- prepare or handle and packaged foods as part of your work
- care for infants or severely immunocompromised patients in a professional capacity

In some situations, it may be necessary to stay at home for longer than 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided. (This may apply to preschool children suffering from gastroenteritis caused by a virus.)

If you work with food in a professional capacity, you are obliged in accordance with legislation on food to notify your employer immediately if you suffer from gastroenteritis.