

## ***Staying healthy and preventing infectious diseases involves many different day-to-day habits.***

Hand-to-face and hand-to-mouth transmission are among the most common ways that infectious diseases can spread. To help reduce this type of spread, **routine handwashing** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is recommended. If you do not have soap and water, an alcohol-based sanitizer or wipe can be used.

**Don't share personal items** such as towels, nail clippers, razors as these can spread C-diff, E-coli, head lice, norovirus, staph skin infections, and streptococcus.

**Mosquitos** spread disease. In 2012, 243 people died from the mosquito-borne West Nile virus (CDC). They also spread Zika, Dengue fever, and malaria. Your best defense is a mosquito repellent. Wear long sleeves and long pants. Empty or throw out items that hold standing water, like planters, buckets, and toys, both inside and outside your home.

**Lyme disease** is an illness caused by bacteria transmitted through the bites of infected black-legged ticks or deer ticks. It is the most reported vector-borne disease in the U.S. (From 2004 to 2016, Lyme accounted for 82 percent of all tick-borne disease reports, and it's estimated that approximately 300,000 people are diagnosed every year (CDC). Tick populations are increasing.

Safe and natural ways to keep pests away are: keep your grass short. (Ticks love long grass with its damp and shady areas). Put down wood chips around your home if possible. Don't leave piles of sticks or leaves lying around – or move them to a dry and sunny location. Include bug repellent plants in your landscape (catmint, garlic, lavender, sage, eucalyptus). Robins and other birds scavenge for ticks – so set up some bird feeders.

**Food borne illnesses** seem to rise in the summer. Leaving food at room temperature causes microbes to increase, so always refrigerate left over foods. Adequately cook all foods – especially meats. Keep surfaces clean and keep foods separate to avoid cross contamination. Be aware of contaminated water when traveling (E-coli).

It's a good idea to have your own summer First Aid Kit. It can be very general, with hand sanitizer, mask, band aids, or sunscreen. Or it can be specific to an activity or place you will be visiting.

A good first aid kit includes items for any situation that might arise – cuts and scrapes; minor burns, sprains, or strains; bug bites; and minor allergic reactions.

- Water
- Hand sanitizer
- Masks and disposable gloves
- Bug repellent
- Wound care supplies – antiseptic solution or wipes, device for flushing wounds or a spray bottle of saline wound cleanser, eye drops, hydrogen peroxide, antibiotic ointment, aloe vera gel, calamine lotion, hydrocortisone cream, bandages of varying sizes, sterile gauze, adhesive tape, and elastic wraps which are handy to stabilize a sprained ankle or hold an ice pack in place
- Medications – allergy medication such as an antihistamine, aspirin, antidiarrheal medication, pain relievers
- Ice packs
- Other – cotton balls and swabs, examination gloves, face masks, scissors, tweezers
- Water purification tablets

Keep your kit easily accessible. Remember to keep it updated.