

# Caregiver Assistance News

*"Caring for You - Caring for Others"*

**Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

[www.aaa7.org](http://www.aaa7.org) **Helping You Age Better!**



**OCTOBER 2014**

## **Infection Control - Better Safe Than Sorry**

### **Beware of Superbugs!!**

Germs are all around us. Even our own bodies normally harbor trillions of microorganisms; however, our immune system and a good balance of "good" and "bad" germs keep us from being ill, in spite of all the viruses, bacteria, fungi and other harmful substances around us.

Lately; however, a number of superbugs (microorganisms that have developed resistance to antibiotics) have emerged, which makes treatment difficult, especially for people who have weakened immune systems. These include the H1N1 virus, a strain of influenza virus known to cause Swine flu; Clostridium difficile (C. diff), a bacterium that causes severe diarrhea; and methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), which can lead to life-threatening infections. Although healthy people may be infected with these superbugs, some people are more likely to have serious complications, such as the elderly, surgery patients, people with HIV or other chronic diseases, and people living in nursing homes.

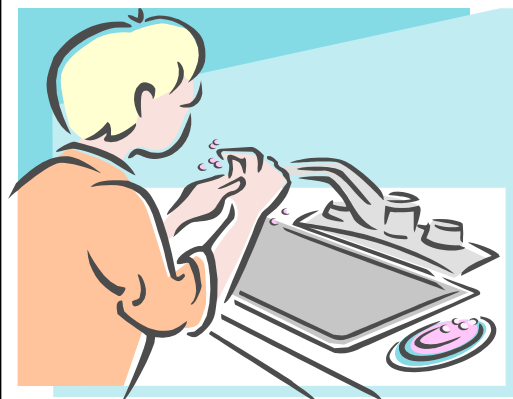
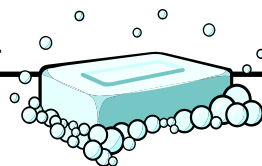


Beat superbugs by keeping them from invading our homes and institutions. Keep clean and safe by:

- Proper hand washing
- Cleaning our homes and surroundings
- Controlling the spread of infection

*Source: World Health Organization ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)); Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)).*

## **Hand Washing: The Single Best Way to Fight Infection**



Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the best way to fight infection. Proper hand washing requires rubbing both hands with soap and water to break down the grease and dirt that carry germs. Fifteen to 30 seconds of thorough hand washing is all it takes to reduce germ count from your hands by 99%.

If clean water and soap are not available, use a hand disinfectant containing alcohol to clean your hands. Rub your hands together for about 15 seconds to ensure that the disinfectant covers them, including under the nails. You can air-dry your hands or use a disposable towel to dry them off, avoiding the use of reusable towels, which may be harboring germs.

## Protect Your Home from Common Germs and Superbugs

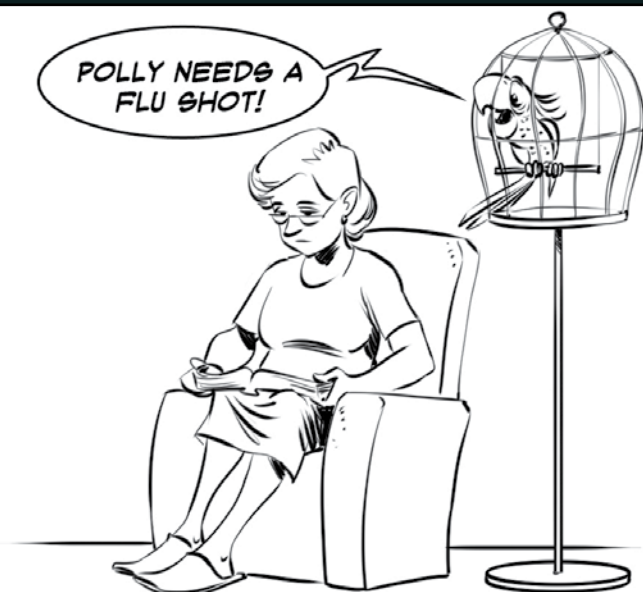
November to April are the months when people tend to stay together in rooms where there is limited air circulation, causing more infections during this time of year. No wonder influenza and gastroenteritis are common, especially among school children, families and office workers. Microorganisms are often transmitted by direct contact, indirect contact, through food, and through the respiratory route. Germs can linger in the air after a person sneezes or coughs, others persist for days on various surfaces, while others contaminate your food.

- Wash your hands before handling food, whether you are preparing, serving or eating.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before cooking or eating.
- Cook shellfish thoroughly.
- Use gloves when handling contaminated clothing, towels and linens. Machine-wash them separately in hot water and machine-dry.
- Wash bath towels once a week, and hand towels every few days; however, if used by someone who is sick, wash after every use. Kitchen towels must be washed separately from other towels or underwear.
- Add 1/4 cup chlorine bleach to your whites when you wash. If you are using a coin laundry, wipe the machine surface with a disinfectant before loading and add a disinfectant to the wash cycle.
- Clean contaminated surfaces with 10 percent bleach solution or any commercial bleach-based product, Lysol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Steam-clean carpets and upholstered furniture regularly.
- Disinfect commonly held items with wipes, such as telephones, the TV remote, coffee tables, the computer mouse, door knobs, etc. Use disinfectant wipes to clean shopping cart handles.
- Vacuum crumbs away and clean up spills immediately to prevent bacterial growth on carpets or furniture.
- Scrub and disinfect the kitchen sink with cleanser daily. Place your wet kitchen sponge in the microwave for two minutes daily to reduce bacterial contamination.

### Stop the Spread

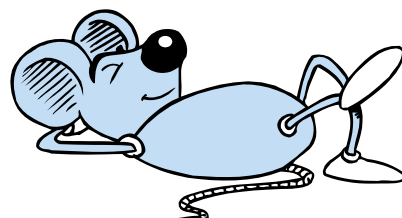
When cleaning, work from the cleanest to the dirtiest area and always wear gloves when giving personal care.

## Live Life Laughing



## Don't Fall - Be Safe!

Know your limits and look for signs of fatigue, such as catching your foot as you walk, so you know when you need to stop and rest.



*"Time heals all wounds, unless you pick at them." - Shawn Alexander (American athlete)*

# TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

## Relax - You Deserve It!

*Working without taking enough rest not only depletes your energy, but can also weaken your immune system and speed up the aging process. You need to relax because your body deserves to calm down and heal itself from all the physical, mental and emotional stress it handles every day.*



*Experts suggest that activating a major nerve that affects many areas of the body can promote immune function, reduce inflammation, prevent disease, and slow down aging. This nerve, called the vagus nerve, can be stimulated to induce stem cell regeneration and tissue renewal simply by relaxing and creating a positive brain state.*

*Here are a few tips to relax and strengthen your vagus nerve function:*

- *Learn meditation techniques to relax your body and mind. Stretching exercises and yoga lessons can benefit your body, mind and soul.*
- *Have a soothing body massage.*
- *Enjoy nature. Walking in the park or doing deep-breathing exercises can help calm your nervous system and rejuvenate your body.*

**Source: Dr. Mark Hyman; [www.drhyman.com](http://www.drhyman.com)**

## Alzheimer's Association Support Programs alzheimer's association

### Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia

*This program will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. Program is free of charge. No registration required.*

**Jackson County: 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm at Four Winds Nursing Facility in Jackson or Jenkins Care Community in Wellston (noted below)**

November 20th - Dealing with Holidays (Jenkins) • December 18th - Open Discussion (Four Winds)  
January 15, 2015 - Making the Transition from Home to a Care Facility (Jenkins)

**Scioto County: 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm at Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg**  
December 9th - Understanding Challenging Behaviors

**For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821 or 1-800-272-3900.**



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## **Safety Tips - *Control the Spread of Infection***

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There are many ways people can spread infection: talking, coughing, sneezing, hugging, kissing, handling food, and using items others have touched are common ways microorganisms are transmitted. These bugs can persist for days or weeks on hard surfaces. You can infect yourself by touching your nose or mouth with contaminated hands.

To control the spread of infection, practice sanitary habits such as covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, using a clean handkerchief or tissue, and disposing of these properly. If you are taking care of a senior, consider using a face mask.

Wash your hands as often as necessary. Avoid sharing utensils, glasses, towels, or anything that may carry germs.

Take a rest and isolate yourself from others if you are sick and potentially infectious to give your body a chance to heal faster and to prevent others from catching your germs.

