

**Good Hygiene Matters**  
**Your Environment and YOU**

## **Home Hygiene-3** **Unseen Health Hazards &** **Why Cleaning Matters for** **Health & Wellness**



**NorthCare Network**

# Home Hygiene–Part 3

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “Hygiene refers to conditions and practices that help to maintain health and prevent the spread of diseases.”<sup>1</sup> Keeping your surroundings clean is important to your wellness. It can have a beneficial effect on both your mental and physical health.

## Unseen Health Hazards: Why Cleaning Is Important

Because there are *unseen germs and bacteria in a dirty home*, it is important to keep our living environment clean. Itchy eyes, runny noses, and wheezing can be caused by dust and dander. A messy place can also hide bugs and pests, which can carry diseases. Infection spreads through your hands, door knobs, hand towels, etc. Maybe *start cleaning by placing a floor mat outside the front door* to keep dirt out of the home. To keep your place clean and sanitary, pay special attention to *kitchens and bathrooms*.

Some areas, like bathrooms, are more prone to molds and bacteria because of the dampness caused by water, while kitchens are breeding areas for food poisoning and bacterial infections. *Maintain a clean living space by practicing these home-hygiene habits:*

- *Organize and pick up a little every day. This keeps your living space more manageable. Cleaning is good exercise and helps to release frustration and anxiety. Whenever you complete a chore, you will feel a sense of accomplishment and pride.*
- *Wash hands frequently. This is always a good thing to do but extend that habit to cleaning surfaces like door knobs, remote controls, and countertops. Disinfect high traffic areas and surfaces to kill “germ highways,” particularly if children or pets are around. This is called “targeted hygiene,” and helps break the chain of infection.<sup>2</sup>*
- *Prepare and cook food using proper culinary hygiene. Wash dishes and clean counters nightly after cooking. It is easier to prepare healthy food in a clean kitchen (and much harder to do when a kitchen is dirty, messy, and filled with dirty dishes).*
- *Clean your toilet at least weekly. Inspect your bathroom regularly for mold to prevent serious health problems. To prevent mildew and fungus growth, sanitize all surfaces (tub and tiles, shower curtain, etc.). Keep air circulating to dry out humidity*







*in the bathroom. This helps reduce air-borne fungi. Perhaps open a window briefly to let in fresh air. Be sure to keep bathroom cleaning supplies separate from the kitchen.*

- *Simple tasks done frequently like sweeping, vacuuming, and taking out the garbage will help prevent bug and other pest infestation. This will make your environment healthier by eliminating pet dander, cobwebs, pollen, mold, and mildew.*

- *Pick up clothes regularly. This means putting dirty clothes in a basket for washing, while hanging up or putting away all clean clothes. Having less clothing in piles will reduce clutter. Perhaps you can work on another cleaning chore while the laundry is washing.*

- *Wash bedding, towels, and other linens weekly to prevent spread of germs and reduce perspiration and dust mites. Wash linens (but not clothing) in hot water to kill more germs. Dry completely in a dryer to prevent mildew.*

- *Don't forget to clean windows and TV and computer screens. This will add to the overall cleanliness of your home.*

## The Importance of Hand Washing

- *Washing your hands. It sounds obvious, but do you wash your hands every time you should? That means using soap, lathering up (using either warm or cold water), and rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Rinse well and dry with a clean towel, or air dry.*

- *Sanitize if you can't wash. If you don't have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol. Apply sanitizer and rub your hands together. Rub it over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are totally dry before touching anything else.*

*Have hand sanitizer on hand for emergency situations like power outages.*

By keeping your home clean, you can have more time to do fun things like walking or biking.



## It's Your Choice.

If you need help with cleaning, check with your case manager for assistance and additional resources.

**GOOD HOME HYGIENE** keeps you healthier. It can reduce airborne issues like allergies, asthma, and respiratory problems, and prevent foodborne illnesses like E. Coli, staph infections, and salmonella.

For more information, call **Katreena Hite**, Integrated Care Specialist, at (906) 225-7344 or 1-800-333-8030