## **Communicable Illness Awareness**

Acknowledgement:

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## What is a communicable illness?

- This describes an illness caused by an infection (viral or bacterial) that can pass from one person to another.
- These infections can vary from being very mild (head cold) to very severe (meningitis).
- The modes of transmissions may include:
  - o Direct skin contact (Staphylococcal infection, Chlamydia, Gonorrhea),
  - Respiratory droplets, from coughing or sneezing (head cold, influenza, pneumonia, tuberculosis),
  - Sharing oral / throat secretions (Strep throat, Mono, Meningococcal Disease) or
  - o Exposure to infected blood (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C).
- Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means that you can pass an infection to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

## What can you do to prevent communicable illness - Practice good hygiene:

- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or use of alcohol-based hand rubs.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.
- Use a barrier (e.g., clothing or a towel) between your skin and shared equipment; and wiping surfaces of equipment before and after use.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unclean hands
- Encourage people around you to cover their nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Do not put anything in your mouth that has been in someone else's mouth
- Talk to your health care provider concerning any available vaccines that may prevent of decrease the severity of a communicable illness
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.

## For more information:

www.cdc.gov

www.who.org

www.safety.louisiana.edu