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Tips for Preventing Infection

BY ELIZABETH WHITTINGTON

Infection occurs when infectious organisms like bacteria, fungi or viruses enter the body and multiply, causing the body's immune system to rev up to fight these invaders. Signs of infection can include fever, a sense of fatigue, cough or shortness of breath, among other symptoms.

The best way to guard against infection is to avoid large crowds or people who may have a cold, flu or other type of infection, and keep clean by frequent hand washing, especially after leaving the restroom and before eating. Use of antibacterial soaps has increased, but studies have shown they have the same effectiveness as regular soap. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are helpful when soap and water are not available, but are not considered a substitute to soap and water.

Other tips to prevent infection include:

- > Keep your mouth and gums healthy by brushing regularly with a soft toothbrush, and use alcohol-free, antiseptic mouthwash.
- > Apply lotion to keep skin moist and to prevent dry, cracking skin.
- > Do not scratch sores or bites; clean, apply antiseptic and bandage any open sores.
- > Do not eat raw (uncooked) foods, including meats, seafood and vegetables, or unpeeled fruits.