



Safe Sneezing and Coughing **From BHS Medical Department**

Sneezing when the air is cold. Sneezing when the sun gets in your eyes. Sneezing for no apparent reason. Is it due to allergies, Flu or Coronavirus?

Most of the time, sneezy tendencies aren't a major concern but in a pandemic they are a serious problem.

Many adults grew up being taught to sneeze and cough into their hands when they don't have a tissue. Of course, covering our mouth keeps the germs from spreading into the air, but not on our hands.

How to sneeze and cough the right way?

It's important for all of us to practice what is being called "Respiratory Etiquette." This is a courteous and simple way to keep our germs to ourselves.

If coughing or sneezing, due to allergies kicking in some dust/pollen which hits your nose/throat, or you are just feeling a cough or sneeze coming on, or perhaps you are even contagious with a virus yet without knowing it or noticing any symptoms, sneezes or coughs could spew germ-filled droplets out into the air where they could infect other people.

Here's what to do:

- Getting as far away from other people is important.

Do your coughing or sneezing in private so you don't infect others.

Continue to keep at least 2 m physical distancing.

It's a matter of minimizing the chance for infectious spread. What seems to spread the virus is force. If there's a lot of force in the cough or sneeze, people standing close can inhale these droplets.

- Don't feel well? Don't go out. If you have reason to believe your coughing and sneezing is because of a respiratory infection, stay home, but if you must go out wear a mask. The mask protects other people in case you are infected.

- You should be wearing a mask at any time you are with people you don't live with, even when you are with people you know. The risk from coughing, sneezing or even talking is lower when you are wearing a mask.



With your mask on, sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow. Keep your mask on to help contain the droplets from your sneeze or cough. If you have a spare mask available, you might want to replace your mask. Wash or replace your mask daily.

If you aren't wearing a mask, let's say you are home or you are driving, cough or sneeze into a tissue by covering the nose and the mouth with that tissue then throw used tissues in the trash.



If you don't have a tissue, cough and sneeze into the crook of your elbow and not in the hands. After sneezing and coughing inside the elbow, no need to worry too much about the cloth, that's because it's unlikely the inside of the elbow will contact other surfaces. This is why the inside of the elbow is preferable to the hand.

If you cough or sneeze into your hand and touch something, you can contaminate a surface. Someone else could touch that surface and potentially become sick.

- Always immediately wash the hands after coughing or sneezing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, clean the hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

This is the same respiratory etiquette as before COVID-19. Coughing or sneezing properly is the best way to limit the spread of dangerous germs.