

# Infectious diseases

Infectious diseases can be caused by harmful organisms, such as bacteria, fungi, and viruses that attack the body. Diseases can be spread directly from person to person or indirectly including, by contaminated surfaces, food, water, or from animals to humans.

## Who is most at risk?

While anyone can be affected by infectious diseases some people are particularly at risk of being infected, or of developing more severe illness including:

- If you have a weakened immune system
- Older adults
- Babies and young children
- If you're pregnant.



### **Remember**

You can reduce the impact on you and your community by taking preventative action. Make sure you and your family are up to date with routine vaccinations.



# What can you do before, during and after?

## Before

- ✓ Practise good hand-washing before eating or preparing food, after using the toilet, stroking a pet, or coughing and sneezing.
- ✓ Practise good food hygiene – wash fruit and vegetables before consuming and make sure food is cooked properly before eating it.
- ✓ Insects that bite – use insect repellent and cover up exposed skin.

## During

- ✓ Speak to a health professional – contact your pharmacy, GP, or NHS 111 for specific advice about certain diseases.
- ✓ Stay at home – wash your hands often with warm water and soap, wear a face mask or cover your mouth and nose with tissue if you cough or sneeze and clean infected areas or surfaces you touch frequently.
- ✓ Protect vulnerable people - they are more likely to have serious complications from infectious diseases, so try not to visit them until you feel better.
- ✓ Rest - take the time needed to recover properly.

## After

- ✓ Continue to take any prescribed medication until you have finished the course, even if you feel better.
- ✓ Try to avoid the reintroduction of the disease, by making it a habit to practice good hygiene. You can do this by regularly washing your hands and taking care to prepare food properly. This will help prevent re-infection.

