

# COVERING YOUR COUGH

## Why should I cover my cough?

- Serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are spread by coughing or sneezing.
- These viruses can be spread to others when the ill person coughs or sneezes into their hands and then contaminates surfaces and objects.
- These illnesses spread easily in crowded places where people are in close contact.

## How do I stop the spread of germs if I am sick?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue in a waste basket.
- Sneeze or cough into your sleeve if you do not have a tissue.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub immediately after coughing or sneezing.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that could be contaminated by the ill person.

## How can I stay healthy?

- Clean your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, if possible.
- Get vaccinated! Influenza (flu), pneumococcal (pneumonia), and pertussis (whooping cough) vaccines can prevent some serious respiratory illnesses.

## When you are at the clinic or hospital:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of the used tissue in the waste basket.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Wear a mask to protect others if you are asked.