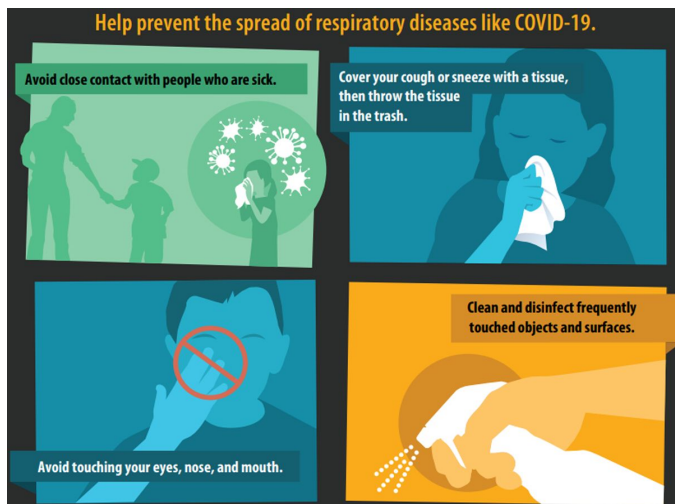


Nurse's Notes Vol. 8

by Marie Angell Habershaw BSN, RN



This week I thought I would review some information to consider as we all learn about slowly reopening our state.

As always, continue to follow guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), as well as reopeningri.com. One new resource I have found to be particularly helpful is a blog by Professor Erin Bromage from UMass Dartmouth. As a comparative immunologist, her work is focused on teaching, research, and public service. Changes are being made often, so review the information from these resources routinely.

Where Are Most People Contracting COVID-19?

Usually, a member of the family is exposed to the virus in the community and brings it back into the household. Due to close proximity, it becomes easy for other household members to contract the virus. Contact tracing is vital so that the Department of Health can determine where the virus started within a community.

One place where the virus can be easily transmitted is in public bathrooms. There are many high touch surfaces in bathrooms - door handles, doors, toilet handles, etc. While we do not yet know if a person can spread the virus through human waste, we do know that flushing a toilet does release aerosolized droplets. So be extra cautious when using public restrooms. Be vigilant about

handwashing, and use a paper towel or tissue to open the door to the restroom after washing your hands.

What Happens When We Cough?

We know that one cough can release thousands of droplets which can travel at high speeds across an air space. Most droplets are large and will fall to the ground due to gravity, but some can and do stay in the air. It is thought that these droplets can travel through a room in a few seconds. **This means that it is critical that we stay home when we do not feel well.** This is the only way we can prevent this virus from spreading more than it is.

What Do We Know?

The places that researchers have seen with high transmission rates are homes, workspaces, public transportation and social gatherings. These gatherings could be within our homes, or out in the community. There have been few documented cases of transmission that occur when gathering outdoors, when proper social distancing is practiced. This is why we are encouraged to keep a space of at least six feet between us.

What Can We Do?

As restrictions change and people begin to return to the community, we need to be vigilant about the following practices.

- Wear a mask to cut down on droplet transmission, wash your hands and use hand sanitizer often when out and about.
- Stay home if you don't feel well, and use your sleeve if coughing or sneezing.
- Teach your family not to touch their face or, if necessary, wash their hands before doing so.

By practicing these precautions, we are able to keep ourselves and our families safe. As always, reach out with any questions or concerns to me at mhabershaw@icccatholicschool.org

Take Care,

Marie Angell Habershaw