

## Public Advisory Note 12 Dysentery The Facts

This leaflet has been produced by Salford Environment Directorate, in order to explain what dysentery is and how, the possibility of dysentery can be reduced by simple precautions.

### WHAT IS DYSENTERY?

It is a germ found in the environment and can particularly affect young children. [Dysentery](#) is an infectious illness which can be prevented. It occurs throughout the world but the kind we have is milder than the tropical kind. It is caused by a germ which enters through the mouth on unwashed hands, infected food or drink. **It can also be carried on objects like taps, door handles and toys which have been handled by a person who has the dysentery germ.**

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Once the germ has been swallowed, the germs pass through the digestive system to the bowels. They multiply until there are millions of them. This number of germs produce the unpleasant symptoms such as diarrhoea, fever, stomach cramps and often vomiting.

**If anyone in your house has an illness like this, you must call the Doctor who can tell you whether the illness is probably dysentery. If so, your doctor will inform the Medical Officer, who is responsible for ensuring that the illness does not spread through the community.**

### WHAT TO DO

Anyone who has diarrhoea due to dysentery **should stay at home** and not go to school or work and should **not** visit other people's homes. The Environmental Health Officer/or Head Teacher will give advice on when the person may return to work/or school.

### HOW CAN THE RISK OF DYSENTERY BE REDUCED?

Every time you wash your hands make sure that you use plenty of soap and wash them under a running tap of hand hot water.

### YOU MUST WASH YOUR HANDS:

- BEFORE:** Preparing food or serving drinks of any kind
- BEFORE:** Leaving the house even for a short time
- AFTER:** Using the toilet or cleaning the toilet
- AFTER:** Doing anything for a person who has Dysentery
- AFTER:** Washing cloths and bedclothes

## **IMPORTANT!**

**Make sure that every person in the house has their own towel. DO NOT share with anybody else. Better still, use paper towels. Small children should have their hands washed for them.**

### **GENERAL ADVICE**

#### **LAUNDRY**

Washing from anyone with dysentery must not go to the launderette or be sent to the laundry.

**Instead:        Keep soiled washing separate from the rest of washing**

**Either:         Place it in a suitable container and boil it for 10 minutes or set the washing machine to HOT**

**If you cannot do either of these soak it overnight in disinfectant. The Environmental Health Officer will advise you on what disinfectant to use.**

**After washing clothes and bedclothes, wash your hands.**

#### **TOILET**

This is the biggest danger area as germs from the bowel are deposited in the lavatory or in the children's potty. Since germs can get through all toilet paper to some extent everyone **must wash their hands properly** after using the toilet.

#### **CLEANING THE TOILET**

Keep a pair of household rubber gloves beside the toilet and always wear them to clean it.

Each time the toilet has been used the door handle, flush handle, toilet seat and (if necessary) the floor must be wiped in that order, with a cloth soaked in a suitable disinfectant. If baby's potty has been used, wipe it clean using disinfectant.

The lavatory pan must be cleaned using a lavatory brush and disinfectant. Flush the toilet holding the brush in the water to clean it, then place it in its holder.

**Important: after doing this wash your hands**

#### **FOOD AND DRINK**

Always wash your hands before handling food. Touch the food as little as possible with your fingers. Serve food fresh. If any food is left over, (***Refrigerators should operate below 5°C***) store in the refrigerator. While there is anyone in the house with dysentery, do not ask people to visit you for a meal or food and drink of any kind. If you have a pet, keep its food well away from your food.

#### **WHERE TO GET HELP**

- 1.        Your Doctor**
- 2.        The School (if an outbreak situation has occurred at the school )**

3. Your Environmental Health Officer will help give you advice to prevent dysentery spreading (see telephone contact details below )

**ADVISORY RULES OF THE KITCHEN**

<p><b>One</b> Always wash your hands before preparing food</p>
<p><b>Two</b> Do not use the same knife and chopping board for cutting raw/ and cooked foods</p>
<p><b>Three</b> Scrub vegetables to remove dirt</p>
<p><b>Four</b> Store and prepare cooked food away from soft cheeses and raw food including vegetables</p>
<p><b>Five</b> Check fridge and freezer are operating between 1°C -4°C and -18°C respectively</p>
<p><b>Six</b> Go through your fridge regularly and throw away food beyond its eat by date</p>
<p><b>Seven</b> Reheat food thoroughly, stir microwaved food to avoid cold spots and leave for the recommended standing times</p>
<p><b>Eight</b> Don't let pets or pet food come into contact with your food, work surfaces or utensils</p>
<p><b>Nine</b> Cook thoroughly. If you want to keep the food for later cool it quickly and refrigerate as soon as possible certainly within 1½ hours</p>
<p><b>Ten</b> Avoid smoking when preparing food, it can spread bacteria when people touch their mouths</p>

**For further Advice/Information contact  
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