

News release

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For immediate release

Simple steps to stop the spread of bugs

Stop spreading germs by scrubbing up after sniffing, sneezing, coughing, preparing food, or using the toilet. These simple steps can help prevent the spread of bugs to vulnerable groups this winter.

National Handwashing Awareness Week runs until Saturday December 12 and the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland PCT Cluster is urging people to remember to wash their hands to reduce the risk of them spreading infections this winter.

Seasonal flu and tummy bugs circulate in the community at this time of year and good hand hygiene is essential in protecting people and reducing the risk of them spreading infections to more vulnerable groups.

Karen Smith, head of infection control speaking on behalf of the PCT Cluster, said: "Nobody wants to be ill over the holiday period. Be thorough and wash the front and backs of the hands and in between fingers making sure nails look clean. Washing hands before and after preparing food will help prevent the spread of coughs, colds and tummy bugs.

"Washing your hands properly could make all the difference when it comes to enjoying a healthy winter."

Some people with underlying health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma cannot fight off infection as easily as others. Good hand hygiene can help reduce the risks of getting an infection for these vulnerable groups of people.

Here are our five handy tips:

Wet: Wetting hands before applying soap minimises irritation of the skin

Soap: Always apply liquid soap to wet hands

Wash: Wash hands vigorously, rub hands together, clean between each finger and the thumbs, making sure the nails look clean

Rinse: Rinse hands thoroughly with clean running water

Dry: Germs spread more easily if hands are wet so make sure hands are dried thoroughly

ENDS

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Notes to editor:

In October 2010 NHS Leicester City and NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland joined forces to form a 'cluster', in line with the requirements of the Department of Health. Although we share one Cluster Board and our staff work across the city and county boundaries, we have not legally merged, and retain our separate statutory duties. Together we serve a population of more than a million people. Cluster formation is an interim stage in the reform of the NHS, involving on-going transfer of most local commissioning functions to GP-led clinical commissioning groups, in line with the Health and Social Care Bill, now before Parliament and the House of Lords.