

# Health and hygiene

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Hygiene is an essential component of healthy living, integral to achieving health and preventing disease. Not just selecting the right food choices but also cooking & consuming them in a hygienic way is equally important in preventing the infectious diseases. Adopting hygienic practices and promoting hygiene in the community, schools and workplace prevents innumerable infectious disease.

Some of the infectious diseases prevented through hygienic practices are diarrhoea, amoebiasis, giardiasis, worm infections, typhoid, jaundice, bacterial pharyngitis, skin infections, tuberculosis, conjunctivitis etc. Many chronic diseases have also been linked to infections, especially unhygienic food, gastric ulcers, certain types of cancers and there is some evidence for cardiovascular disease.

**Following are some points, which should be inculcated in day-to-day life:**

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap after urination, after using the toilet and also after changing diapers.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after handling pets.
- Before touching any food item, wash your hands with soap and water.
- Keep nails short and clean. Clean & Trim the nails of both hands.
- Your hair should be tied when you cook.
- Preferably the cooking area and the area used for washing utensils should be separate and dedicated for that purpose and not connected to the bathrooms or any other source of potential faecal matter like washing clothes.
- Kitchen should be well lighted & ventilated (with either chimney/exhaust fan) & with meshed windows.

- The cooking and eating area should be preferably elevated.
- Keep the cooking, washing, and utility area and kitchen clothes clean.  
The kitchen surface and the floor should be regularly cleaned.  
Additionally, clean the kitchen in the night. Kitchens left dirty in the night tend to attract pests which are carriers of infection.
- Cover all foods, cooked as well as uncooked, at all times.
- If a house fly or any insect has even fleetingly sat on a food item, then, that food item needs to be discarded.
- Protect the kitchen & food items from insects, pests & other animals.