

# 8WAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH CF

TO GUARD AGAINST GERMS **IN EVERYDAY LIFE**



**Germs are everywhere**, but there are things you can do to reduce your risk of getting sick. The following tips are intended to keep you informed so that you can make the best decisions for yourself.

These recommendations are based on the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's Guidelines for Infection Prevention and Control for CF. The primary goal of the Guidelines is to help people with CF preserve and protect their health.

## **1. Keep a Safe 6-Foot Distance**

Germs can spread as far as 6 feet (2 meters) through droplets released in the air when you cough or sneeze.

Try to stay at least 6 feet away from others with CF or anyone with a cold, flu or infection in all settings, both outdoors and especially indoors, such as in school or at work.

For people with CF who do not live together, avoid activities that may put you in close contact with others with CF or anyone who is sick. Examples of activities to avoid are:

- Shaking hands, hugging or kissing.
- Sharing car rides.
- Sharing hotel rooms.
- Taking the same fitness classes.

## **2. Wash Your Hands**



You can catch and spread germs when you touch something with germs already on it, like a doorknob or handrail, and then touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

Wash your hands with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol-based hand gel. Encourage your family and friends to keep their hands clean as well.

Everyone should wash or clean their hands :

### Before

- Handling food.
- Eating or drinking.
- Beginning CF treatments.

### After

- Coughing or sneezing.
- Using the bathroom.
- Touching shared objects, like pens or doorknobs.
- Touching or cleaning up after pets.
- Finishing CF treatments.

## ➔ 3. Cover Your Cough



You can spread germs to others when you cough or sneeze. Germs can remain in the air on tiny droplets – ready to be breathed in. They can also remain on surfaces long after you’ve coughed or sneezed on or near them.

Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away immediately, then wash your hands with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol-based hand gel.

If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your inner elbow. If you cough or sneeze into your hands, wash them immediately afterward.

## ➔ 4. Clean and Disinfect Your Nebulizer

It is important to always clean and disinfect your nebulizer since you can breathe in germs through your nebulizer and risk developing a lung infection. People with CF should have their own nebulizer and perform respiratory treatments in separate rooms to avoid spreading germs.

### When using a reusable nebulizer:

After each use, clean and disinfect your nebulizer by following the CF Foundation’s guidelines for nebulizer care at: [www.streamcrate.com/CFFWebcast/CaringNebulizer](http://www.streamcrate.com/CFFWebcast/CaringNebulizer).

### When using an Altera, eRapid or other eFlow technology nebulizer:

After each use, clean and disinfect your nebulizer by following the CF Foundation’s guidelines for nebulizer care at: <http://bit.ly/CaringNeb-eFlow>.

## ➔ 5. Don't Share Personal Items



Germs can remain on surfaces of common objects like straws and utensils for hours. When you touch something with germs already on it, you can pick up and spread those germs.

Avoid sharing items that can come in contact with saliva or other body fluids. This is particularly important for respiratory equipment like nebulizers and airway clearance devices. People with CF should have their own nebulizer and airway clearance devices.

## ➔ 6. Avoid Frequent Contact with Dust & Dirt

Some germs can hide in soil and be carried on dust or dirt particles. You can get these germs if you breathe them in or transfer the germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth without first washing your hands.

Guard against these germs by limiting time spent doing activities that would put you in frequent contact with dust and dirt, like:

- Gardening or mowing the lawn.
- Being around a construction site or home renovation.

## ➔ 7. Let Your School or Workplace Know

Letting your school or workplace know you have CF is a personal decision. You do not have to disclose this information, but enlisting the help of your school or workplace can make it easier for you to keep a safe 6-foot distance and to minimize contact with others with CF.

If you attend school or work in the same setting with another person with CF, educate the school administrators or your employer about CF and work with them on ways to reduce the risk of getting and spreading germs. Reducing this risk among people with CF, as well as other students and staff, will help everyone stay healthy.

➔ **8.** Get Vaccinated



Vaccinations help your body protect itself from germs, like the flu virus, which are especially dangerous for people with CF.

Help your body guard itself against germs by staying up to date on your vaccinations. Encourage your family and friends to also get vaccinated to reduce the risk of spreading germs.

For a list of what vaccinations to get and when to get them, talk to your care team at your next clinic visit.

You can also visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at [www.cdc.gov/Vaccines/Schedules](http://www.cdc.gov/Vaccines/Schedules).

To learn more:

- Talk to your CF care team at your next clinic or hospital visit.
- View the full IPC Guidelines on the CF Foundation's website at [www.cff.org/treatments/CFCareGuidelines/InfectionControl](http://www.cff.org/treatments/CFCareGuidelines/InfectionControl).
- View Frequently Asked Questions on the CF Foundation's website at [www.cff.org/treatments/CFCareGuidelines/InfectionControl/FAQs](http://www.cff.org/treatments/CFCareGuidelines/InfectionControl/FAQs).