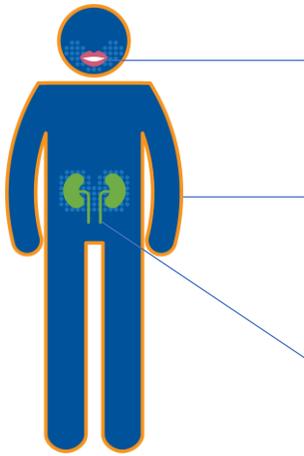


# Head to Toe

## Infection Prevention for Residents

Our bodies have natural defenses against harmful germs. **It is important to protect these defenses in order to prevent common infections.** For many residents in nursing homes, these defenses may be weakened due to illness or the natural aging process.

**The mouth, skin, and urinary tract are important areas to protect to keep residents infection-free.**



The mouth is an entry point for bacteria that can travel to the lungs. This bacteria can cause **pneumonia**.



The skin is our largest organ and the first line of defense against infections. A break in the skin allows bacteria to enter the body which can lead to a **skin infection**.



The urinary tract makes and stores urine, one of the waste products of the body. **Urinary tract infections** occur in this body system.

### What is your role in infection prevention?

**Everyone has a role to play in preventing infections!** Here are some things you can do to keep the nursing home environment infection-free.

#### If you are a nursing home resident:

- Remember to **perform or ask staff for assistance in daily care** including oral hygiene, bathing, staying hydrated, and using the bathroom regularly.
- **Wash your hands** to prevent the spread of germs before and after meals as well as after using the restroom.
- Ensure nursing home staff are **aware of your care preferences and sensitivities** so that they can provide the best care in line with your specific needs.
- If you are independent in care, talk with nursing home staff to ensure you are **informed about important steps to take to be infection-free**.
- Notify the nursing home staff if you have **any concerns about your care or have any signs of an infection**.



#### If you are visiting a loved one in a nursing home:

- **Wash your hands** before entering the nursing home.
- **Refrain from visiting** the nursing home **while you are sick**, unless it is an emergency.
- **Assist your loved one in communicating their care preferences and sensitivities** to the nursing home care team.

### Medicine isn't always the answer.

**Your care team works together to decide if an antibiotic is necessary.** Receiving antibiotics you do not need increases the risk for other infections such as infectious diarrhea (commonly known as *C. diff*). If you have questions about antibiotic medications, speak with the nurse.