

Further Reading

Common Communicable Diseases.

These are diseases that are easily spread either from person to person or host to person. A host refers to a carrier of disease -causing organisms (germs).

Coughs and Colds.

They are caused by a virus and get better on their own within one week. It causes sneezing, sore throat, running nose, nasal stuffiness and coughs. It is spread through airborne droplets coughed by the sick person into the air

Chicken pox.

It is a common viral disease. The virus is found in the nose and throat and is spread through the air from person to person. Incubation period is two to three weeks.

Measles.

Measles is caused by a virus, It is a very serious and infectious disease. The virus passes from one person to another through the air. A person who has measles can spread it to others a few days before the rash appears and a few days after that. The infected child should be given proper care to avoid any associated complications from developing e.g. pneumonia.

Mumps.

Mumps is a virus that causes the swelling of the salivary glands, usually the parotid gland. The virus is found in the saliva of infected people. It is spread by direct contact with a droplet spread from an infected person, or indirect contact with the contaminated articles of a sick person.

Tetanus.

This is a disease that makes all the muscles stiff, usually beginning with the jaw muscles. It is also referred to as lockjaw. It is caused by the tetanus bacteria which live in the soil. When this finds their way into a cut wound, they change their form and begin to make deadly poison or toxin. As the amount of toxins increase in the body, the muscles cramp and twitch. Sometimes the hardening may affect the bones. Many people die of tetanus.

Whooping Cough.

This is a very infectious disease. The virus gets into the child's lungs through the air. Young children can easily die of the disease; therefore, immunisation should be given to prevent it. Isolate the sick child from others.

Hepatitis B.

Hepatitis B is a viral infection of the liver. The virus affects many people causing a disease of the liver called liver cirrhosis. It is a highly contagious disease that is easily passed from one person to another by contact through body fluids. The vaccine is given in three doses together with the DPT vaccine.

Diphtheria.

It's an infection of the nose and throat that is preventable through vaccination. It is transmitted by respiratory secretion that contain the diphtheria bacteria from an infected person when they cough or sneeze

Tuberculosis.

It is an infectious disease that affects the lungs and it is caused by a bacteria. It is spread when an infected

person releases germs into the air through coughing, spitting and talking. People with active TB show symptoms such as; bad cough, pain in the chest, fatigue or weakness, fever, weight loss and night sweats

Influenza.

It is an infection caused by a virus. It affects parts of the respiratory system such as the nose, throat and lungs. Influenza, or the flu as it is commonly called, is usually mistaken for the common cold. However, its symptoms are more severe and can easily kill. Immunisation is given at six weeks, ten weeks and fourteen weeks.

Rotavirus.

Rotavirus is a contagious gastrointestinal infection that causes inflammation of the stomach and intestines. It causes vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and abdominal pain. Rotavirus germs are found in stool and can spread to other surfaces with unwashed hands after using the bathroom. Use of vaccines and hydration are some of the remedies for rotavirus.

Factors Contributing to the Spread of Communicable Diseases

1. Poor Hygiene

- Lack of handwashing and personal hygiene.
- Contaminated food and water sources.
- Improper sanitation, such as open defecation.

2. Crowded Living Conditions

- High population density increases transmission.
- Poor ventilation in crowded spaces (e.g., public transport, schools, dormitories).

3. Poor Waste Management

- Accumulation of garbage creates breeding grounds for vectors (e.g., mosquitoes, rats).
- Improper disposal of medical and biological waste.

4. Lack of Vaccination

- Failure to receive routine immunizations increases susceptibility.
- Misinformation or vaccine hesitancy leading to outbreaks.

5. Contaminated Water and Food

- Consumption of unsafe water can spread diseases like cholera and typhoid.
- Poor food handling and storage can lead to foodborne infections.

6. Climate and Environmental Factors

- Warm, humid climates favor the growth of bacteria and viruses.
- Natural disasters (floods, hurricanes) disrupt sanitation systems, increasing disease risk.

7. Travel and Migration

- Movement of infected individuals across borders spreads diseases globally.
- Air travel accelerates transmission of infectious agents.

8. Inadequate Healthcare Facilities

- Limited access to medical treatment and preventive care.
- Overburdened healthcare systems fail to control disease outbreaks.

9. Close Contact with Infected Individuals

- Direct contact with infected bodily fluids (e.g., coughing, sneezing).
- Sharing personal items (e.g., towels, utensils).

10. Weak Public Health Policies

- Lack of disease surveillance and reporting.
- Poor implementation of quarantine and control measures