

Infectious Disease and Me – Glossary

Antibiotics – Medications that specifically target and clear away bacteria

Chickenpox – an infectious disease causing a mild fever and a rash of itchy inflamed blisters. It is caused by the herpes zoster virus and mainly affects children, who are afterward usually immune.

Chain of Transmission – The spread of an infection within a community is described as a “chain,” several interconnected steps that describe how a disease-causing germ moves about.

Contagious – The ability of the pathogen or disease to spread very rapidly.

Disinfection – The process to killing disease-causing germs

Evidence-based – when something is supported by a large amount of scientific research

Germs – very small organisms (microorganisms). Some of which cause disease.

Hand Hygiene - A general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand Hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of microorganisms from the hands.

Hand sanitizer - a liquid or gel, 70-90% alcohol based, that is used to clean the hands and kill infection-causing microorganisms.

Immune response – an organism, or person’s response to clear out a pathogen that does not belong in our bodies.

Immunity - the ability of an organism, or person, to resist a particular infection

Infectious agent – a microorganism (e.g., bacteria, viruses, parasites, etc.,) that can cause infection

Infection prevention and control (IPAC) is a practical, evidence-based approach aimed at breaking a link in the chain of transmission and preventing people from being harmed by avoidable infections.

Influenza (“flu”) - a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory passages causing fever, severe aching, and fatigue.

Lipids - a substance that is insoluble in water and soluble in alcohol, ether, and chloroform. Often referred to as “fats”

Pathogen– microorganisms, such as viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites that infect a living host such as humans and use the host’s resources to replicate itself and cause disease.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - physical barriers between you and germs. Examples of PPE include gloves, long sleeved gowns, masks and eye protection.

Susceptible person - someone who is not vaccinated or otherwise immune, or a person with a weakened immune system who has a way for the germs to enter the body

Tuberculosis - a potentially serious infectious disease that mainly affects the lungs. The bacteria that cause tuberculosis are spread from person to person through tiny droplets released into the air via coughs and sneezes

Transmission - refers to the way germs are moved to a susceptible person.