

# 28 Shelter and ventilation

## OVERVIEW



When diseases, such as respiratory infections, influenza or meningitis, are transmitted by droplets (coughing and sneezing), a lack of good ventilation can cause them to affect others in the same house.

When diseases are transmitted by contaminated water or bad sanitation, a lack of shelter, clean water containers or toilets can help an epidemic to spread further.

## What you need to KNOW

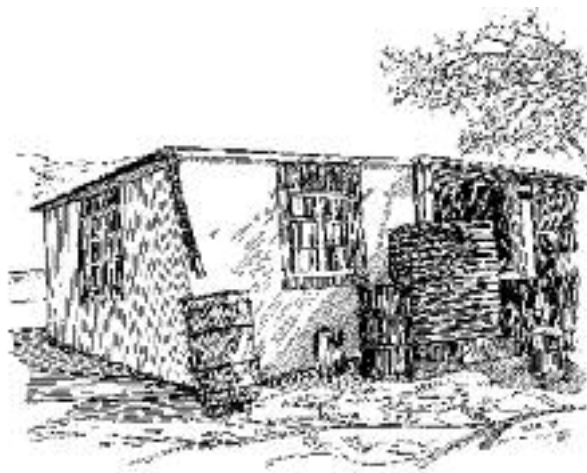
- ➔ If germs are transmitted by droplets, as happens in respiratory infections, influenza and meningitis, they can concentrate in enclosed places where a sick person is coughing or sneezing and are more likely to infect others in the same place.
- ➔ To reduce the risk to others, it is a good idea to ventilate the house. This can be done by opening windows and allowing fresh air to circulate.
- ➔ When many people live in the same space, they can also catch the infection more easily. If possible, people should have enough space to move and breathe freely.
- ➔ Having proper shelter also helps keep sick people away from healthy ones, so they do not infect others.
- ➔ If germs are transmitted by contaminated water or bad sanitation, such as those causing diarrhoeas, a lack of running water or good toilets can make it easier for the epidemic to spread.

## Use community message(s): 22

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## What you can DO

- ➔ When there is an epidemic of air-borne diseases, it is important to tell your community about the importance of good ventilation.
- ➔ Advise people to keep their windows open if the weather permits, especially if there is a sick person in the house.
- ➔ Cooking using charcoal or firewood inside an enclosed space can be bad for people sick with air-borne diseases, especially if there is not good ventilation.
- ➔ Talk to the community about clean water supply and sanitation (see *Action tools 8 and 9*)
- ➔ When people are moving because of conflict or disaster, shelter is usually not as good as it is in normal situations. You should help people to have the best possible shelter, which is well ventilated and has a good water supply, storage and reasonable sanitation.



*Open doors and windows  
to get proper ventilation into the shelter*