

27 Respiratory etiquette

OVERVIEW



It is not nice or healthy to cough or sneeze in people's faces.
It can transmit diseases that are carried by droplets or the air.
Learning how to cough properly is called "respiratory etiquette", because it is a better behaviour (nicer for those around you) and prevents the spread of disease.

Why learn respiratory etiquette?

- Some diseases, as we have seen, can be transmitted from one person to another through droplets of saliva or mucus or in the air.
- This means that when we cough, we may spread the disease to other people and make them sick.
- To avoid giving the disease to other people, we have to learn not to spread the germs by coughing in the open.

DOs and DON'Ts

- A lot of people cough or sneeze into their hands in order to keep germs from spreading. This is NOT good because, after you cough or sneeze in your hand, you can still transmit the germs by touching things or shaking people's hands. **DON'T COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO YOUR HAND.**
- The correct way to cough or sneeze without transmitting germs is to use a handkerchief or your sleeve. When you cough or sneeze into either of these, it is less likely you will spread the germs. **DO COUGH OR SNEEZE INTO A HANDKERCHIEF OR ON YOUR SLEEVE.**

Use community message(s): 18

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What you can DO

- ➔ Tell people in the community about respiratory etiquette.
- ➔ Explain to others why respiratory etiquette is important and how it helps to prevent diseases transmitted by droplets carried in the air.
- ➔ Show them how to cough and sneeze properly and tell them to show others at home or in the community.
- ➔ Ask your local schools if they would like you to come and speak to children about respiratory etiquette.
- ➔ When talking about respiratory etiquette, also teach people about proper hygiene (see *Action tool 11*).
- ➔ Make posters that show the DOs and DON'Ts of respiratory etiquette and put them up around your community (see *Action tool 29* for more information on health promotion techniques).



Correct and incorrect ways of coughing