

# 26 Social distancing

## OVERVIEW



Social distancing is an effective way to prevent epidemics from spreading.

For example, if an influenza pandemic occurs, there is little that can be done to treat patients in the first period of the pandemic because there are not enough medicines and no vaccine. The most important thing to do if a pandemic occurs is TO PREVENT IT FROM SPREADING.

## What you need to KNOW

- ➔ One of the best ways to prevent the spread of a pandemic is social distancing.
- ➔ Because influenza is spread by droplets released while coughing or sneezing, the way to prevent transmission is either for the sick person to follow coughing etiquette (see *Action tool 27*) or by others keeping a safe distance from sick people who may cough or sneeze droplets containing germs.
- ➔ If someone is closer than 1.5 metres to a person who is sick with influenza, he/she may inhale the droplets and get sick too.

**Social distancing is about staying at a safe distance from other people in the case of a pandemic.**



*Coughing without covering  
your mouth spreads germs*

**Use community message(s): 18**

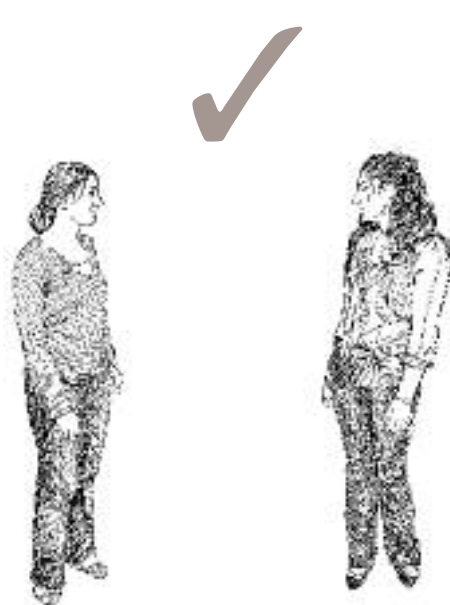
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## Tips to protection yourself from influenza

- ➔ In an influenza pandemic, always protect yourself with the proper equipment, by wearing a mask, gloves, etc. (see *Action tools 20 and 21*).
- ➔ Keep a distance of at least 1.5 metres from people who may be sick with influenza.
- ➔ Do not shake hands with or touch people who may be sick with influenza; they may have coughed or sneezed into their hands and can then pass the germs on to you.
- ➔ Use health and hygiene promotion to tell the community about the importance of social distancing and teach them how to avoid getting sick with influenza (see *Action tools 11 and 27*).



*Too close*



*Safe distance to keep apart*