

Fair Lawn Nurses



Nurse's Newsletter



INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Information garnered from CDC and Mayo Clinic- submitted by Kathleen Binetti

Infectious diseases are disorders caused by organisms-such as bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites. Many organisms live in and on our bodies. They are normally harmless or helpful, but under certain conditions, some organisms may cause disease.

These diseases can be passed from person to person or from animal and insect bites. They may be transmitted by ingesting contaminated food or water or being exposed to organisms in the environment.

Signs and symptoms vary depending on the organism causing the infection, but often include fever and chills. Mild complaints may respond to rest and home remedies, while some life-threatening infections may require hospitalization.

Infectious disease can be caused by:

- **Bacteria**. These are one cell organisms responsible for illnesses such as strep throat, urinary tract infections and MRSA (which is resistant to antibiotics.)
- **Viruses**. These organisms cause a multitude of diseases from the common cold and flu to HIV-AIDS. Symptoms of the flu include fever, chills, cold and other upper respiratory symptoms.
- **Fungi**. Many skin diseases, such as ringworm and athlete's foot are caused by fungi. Other types may infect the lungs or nervous system.
- **Parasites**. Malaria is caused by a tiny parasite that is transmitted by a mosquito bite. Other parasites may be transmitted to humans from animal feces.

Person to person contact is a common way for infectious disease to be spread via cough, sneeze, touch, kiss to someone who isn't infected. Exchange of bodily fluids from sexual contact or a blood transfusion are additional routes of transmission. Many organisms can be passed through indirect contact. They linger on an inanimate object, such as a desktop, door knob, railing or faucet handle. Measles virus can remain active in the air for 2 hours.