Steps to Control Infection in the Home

1. To break the chain of infection you will take steps to
   a. reduce numbers of germs
   b. reduce the places where germs grow
   c. reduce the exit and entry of germs
   d. stop the spread of germs, and
   e. protect the person you care for by improving their resistance to infection.
2. Be sure the person you care for has regular immunizations. Know the immunizations their doctor recommends and be sure to keep the immunizations current.
   a. A yearly flu vaccine is needed for persons over age 65 or with impaired immune function (e.g., cancer).
3. You should have a flu shot if you live with or care for someone who is high risk for the flu.
4. Strengthen a person's defense against infection by having them eat a good balanced meal of fresh fruits, vegetables and a source of protein, such as meat, fish or eggs.
5. When you care for someone at risk for an infection, keep him or her away from germs. Avoid close contact with large crowds or other sick people.
6. If you become ill, stop caring for the person if you can. Try to get someone to fill in for you until you have recovered. If no one is available to help you, wear a mask and wash hands frequently when near the person.
7. Reduce the places where germs grow through routine bathing. Always use soap and water to remove any drainage, dried secretions or excess perspiration on a person's skin. Thoroughly clean hard to reach areas or areas where skin overlaps (e.g. under the breast, lower abdomen and groin).
8. Wash soiled linen separately from clothing or other linen in hot water (with chlorine bleach if possible).
9. Anything soiled from body secretions or discharges contains germs. Place all tissues or soiled dressings in a plastic trash bag.
10. Change dressings or bandages when they become damp or soiled, based on your doctor's directions. The dark moist environment of a dressing is a place where germs grow.
11. When the person you care for has an infection, it is easy for them to spread infection to any object they touch. Keep table and counter surfaces clean, and dry. Use bleach based cleaner.
12. If the person you care for has a drainage bag of any kind, the fluid in the bag is the perfect home for germs to grow. Never raise a drainage bag above the level of the site being drained. This causes contaminated urine or drainage to return to the site, possibly causing infection.
13. Keep drainage bags below the level of the site being drained at all times.
14. Empty all drainage bags according to the doctor's order.
    a. Wear disposable gloves to avoid touching the fluid.

b. Wear a pair of eyeglasses when you flush the fluid down a toilet. Splashing of fluid can cause drops to enter your eyes and cause you to get an infection.
15. If you give a shot or injection to the person you care for, take steps to avoid needle sticks. An accidental stick can cause germs to enter your body and cause an infection. **Never re-cap a used needle**.
16. After giving an injection place the used needle and syringe directly into a puncture proof and leak proof container with lid, like an empty coffee can or plastic detergent bottle.
17. If the person you care for is incontinent of urine or stool, or has a large wound with an excessive amount of drainage, avoid contact with the fluid by wearing disposable gloves.
18. Dispose of soiled clothing and linen carefully.
a. Launder in hot water with chlorine bleach.
b. Wash separately from clothing or other household items. Anything soiled from body secretions or discharges contains germs.
19. Germs enter and exit the body through the respiratory tract. Have the person you care for always cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue away immediately. Then have them wash their hands or use a disinfectant towelette or hand gel.
20. Hand Washing is the single best way to prevent the spread of infection.

Hand Washing

1. Wash your hands in these situations:
   a. Before and after caring for a person
   b. Before eating or handling food
   c. Between changes of gloves
   d. After handling dirty equipment used to care for someone (e.g. a bath basin or syringe)
   e. After handling dirty linen
   f. After you touch any body fluids like saliva, urine, or drainage from a wound when caring for a person.
   g. After going to the bathroom.
2. Have paper towels or a clean cloth towel near the sink. While standing in front of a sink, turn on the water. Do not splash water on your clothing. Be sure the water is warm.
3. Wet your hands and wrists thoroughly with running water.
4. Use regular hand soap or antibacterial soap. Apply a liberal amount of soap or rub hands together vigorously to produce lather.
5. Wash hands and use plenty of lather and friction for at least 15-20 seconds. Use this trick, sing the "happy birthday song" twice, that is about 15 seconds.
6. While washing interlace fingers and rub the palms and back of your hands. Clean under soiled fingernails with the fingernails of your other hand.
7. Rinse your hands and wrists thoroughly. Keep your hands down so the germs you remove rinse down into the sink.
8. Take a cloth or paper towel and dry your hands thoroughly from fingers to wrists and forearms.
9. Throw away the used paper towel in the waste basket
10. Use a clean paper towel and turn off the water faucet. This prevents germs on the damp towel from spreading to the faucet.
11. When you are away from home or not near a restroom, use alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers. Alcohol gels work by using friction and drying. Rub the surfaces of your hands and between your fingers firmly until all of the gel is dry.