## Teacher Refresher – Respiratory Hygiene



**Key Stage 2**

Respiratory tract infections (RTI) are infections that happen in the lungs, chest, sinuses, nose and throat, for example, coughs and colds, the flu and pneumonia. RTIs can spread easily from person-to-person through the air, through person-to-person contact (touching hands, hugging, kissing) or by touching contaminated surfaces. COVID-19 is the name of the disease caused by the virus SARS-CoV-2. The virus can be spread by getting into the non-infected person’s nose or eyes because they touch their face with contaminated hands. Coughing and sneezing is a way in which our body tries to get rid of any harmful microbes and particles we might inhale from getting deeper into our respiratory tract. These get caught on the nose hair or might irritate the back of our throat or our lungs. This sends a message to the brain which then sends a message back to our nose, mouth, lungs and chest telling them to blow the irritation away. In the case of the cold millions of virus particles rush out, spread through the air and contaminate the surface they land on; this could be our food, surfaces or hands.

It is important that good respiratory hygiene is taught from a young age, and that key messages are built on over time. This is especially important in the approach to the winter cold/flu season each year, or when there is an outbreak of an infectious disease. Common symptoms of a respiratory infection can include headache, sore throat, fever, and sometimes a runny or blocked nose. These infections can also cause sneezing and/or coughing, loss of taste or smell, and rarely nausea/vomiting or diarrhoea. To prevent the spread of harmful microbes from coughs or sneezes: dispose of tissues and regularly wash your hands.

* **Catch** it: cover your mouth and nose with a tissue. If you don’t have a tissue, cover with your upper sleeve or elbow (not your hands).
* **Bin** it: throw away the used tissue at once to avoid spreading infection to surfaces, or other people.
* **Kill** it: wash your hands well with soap and water, or hand sanitiser if soap and water are not available, immediately after throwing the tissue in the bin.

We can help prevent the spread of these infections (like the flu) by getting vaccinations. Another way of preventing the spread of cold and flu is learning how to successfully practice good respiratory hygiene when we cough or sneeze. It is a natural reflex to put our hands towards our faces when we sneeze, but it is important to replace this action with new habits of respiratory hygiene to reduce the spread of infection.

1. of mess and prevent bacteria from spreading.
2. Cooking food until it has reached 70°C and stayed at that temperature for 2 minutes. General advice is that white meat/mince should be steaming hot and cooked all the way through (juices run clear).
3. Chilling, including cooling it down quickly to stop microbes from multiplying and storing food correctly. Refrigerators should be kept ≤4°C.
4. Preventing cross-contamination of harmful microbes found on food spreading to other foods (for example via our hands or kitchen utensils), which then cause illness when those foods are eaten.

One of the key moments for hygiene is when handling and preparing raw foods, particularly poultry. Remember that you should not wash raw chicken or other meats before cooking them, as this can splash microbes onto surfaces or other foods and increase the risk of foodborne illness.

Labels placed on foods are used to determine when it is safe to eat the food, or when the quality of the food is at its best. ‘Use by’ refers to when the food is still safe to eat. Food should not be consumed after this date. ‘Best before’ refers to when the food will be at its best quality, but it is worth noting that consumption after this date should still be safe.

### SW1 Super Sneeze

*My Observations*

3. What actually happened when the hand was over the mouth to sneeze? (where and how far did the sneeze travel?)

The sneeze was mainly contained by the hand, which is now contaminated. The sneeze travelled less far than when uncovered and reached fewer people.

4. What actually happened when the tissue was over the mouth to sneeze? (Where and how far did the sneeze travel?)

The sneeze was contained by the tissue. The sneeze travelled less far than when uncovered or covered by the hand and reached fewer people. The hand holding the tissue is contaminated.

*My Conclusions*

5. Why is hand hygiene important after coughing and sneezing?

When covering sneezes with hands or tissues the hands are exposed to numerous microbes. If left unwashed, these potentially contagious microbes can be transmitted to other people through touch.

6. What can we do to stop the germs from spreading from person to person?

Cover coughs and sneezes, preferably with a tissue, and bin the tissue and wash hands with antimicrobial soap and water immediately.

If a tissue is unavailable, sneezes should be covered by the crook of the elbow or sleeve.

### SW3 Fill in the Blanks

* Infections
* Contagious
* Symptoms
* Sneezes
* Coughs
* Hand sanitiser
* Harmful
* Vaccinated

### SW2 Respiratory Hygiene Quiz

How can you spread microbes to others?

* Touching
* Sneezing
* Coughing

After we sneeze into our hands, we should:

* Wash our hands

If you do not have a tissue available, the best option from the following is to sneeze:

* Into your sleeve

When sneezing, the best way to stop microbes from spreading is:

* To use a tissue to cover your sneeze

What should you do with a tissue after sneezing into it?

* Put it straight in the bin

What might happen if we don’t wash our hands after sneezing into them?

* Transfer harmful microbes to other people