El Camino Hospital
THE HOSPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Cover your cough

Why should I cover my cough?

Serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) are spread by:

- Coughing or sneezing
- Unclean hands

These illnesses spread easily in crowded places where people are in close contact.

How do I stop the spread of germs if I am sick?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue in a waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- After coughing or sneezing, always cleanse your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.

How can I stay healthy?

- Cleanse your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, if possible.
- Get vaccinated! Influenza (flu) and pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccines can prevent some serious respiratory illnesses.

When you are at a clinic or hospital:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and dispose of the used tissue in the waste basket.
- Cleanse your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser.
- You may also be asked to wear a mask to protect others.
- Don't worry if you see staff and other people wearing masks. They are preventing the spread of germs.

Special instructions may be added here.