

Method of Transmission of Common Communicable Diseases

Disease	Infectious Agent	Mode of Transmission	Method of Entry
Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)	Blood, semen, or other body fluids, including breast milk	Sexual contact Contact with blood or mucous membranes or by way of contaminated syringes Placental transmission	Reproductive tract Contact with blood Placental transmission Breast-feeding
Cholera	Feces	Water or food contaminated with feces	Mouth to intestine
Diphtheria	Sputum and discharges from nose and throat Skin lesions (rare)	Droplet infection from patient coughing	Through mouth or nose to throat
Gonococcal disease	Lesions Discharges from infected mucous membranes	Sexual activity Hands of infected persons soiled with their own discharges	Reproductive tract or any mucous membrane
Hepatitis A, viral	Feces	Food or water contaminated with feces	Mouth to intestine
Hepatitis B, viral and delta hepatitis	Blood and serum-derived fluids, including semen and vaginal fluids	Contact with blood and body fluids	Exposure to body fluids including during sexual activity Contact with blood
Hepatitis C	Blood and other body fluids	Parenteral drug use Laboratory exposure to blood Health care workers exposed to blood (i.e., dentists and their assistants, and clinical and laboratory staff)	Infected blood Contaminated needles
Hookworm	Feces	Cutaneous contact with soil polluted with feces Eggs in feces hatch in sandy soil	Larvae enter through skin (soles of feet), migrate through the body, and settle in small intestine
Influenza	As in pneumonia	Respiratory droplets or objects contaminated with discharges	As in pneumonia
Leprosy	Cutaneous or mucosal lesions that contain bacilli Respiratory droplets	Cutaneous contact or nasal discharges of untreated patients	Nose or broken skin
Measles (rubeola)	As in streptococcal pharyngitis	As in streptococcal pharyngitis	As in streptococcal pharyngitis

Meningitis, meningococcal	Discharges from nose and throat	Respiratory droplets	Mouth and nose
Mumps	Discharges from infected glands and mouth	Respiratory droplets and saliva	Mouth and nose
Ophthalmia neonatorum (gonococcal infection of eyes of newborn)	Vaginal secretions of infected mother	Contact with infected areas of vagina of infected mother during birth	Directly on conjunctiva
Pertussis	Discharges from respiratory tract	Respiratory droplets	Mouth and nose
Pneumonia	Sputum and discharges from nose and throat	Respiratory droplets	Through mouth and nose to lungs
Poliomyelitis	Discharges from nose and throat, and via feces	Respiratory droplets Contaminated water	Through mouth and nose
Rubella	As in streptococcal pharyngitis	As in streptococcal pharyngitis	As in streptococcal pharyngitis
Streptococcal pharyngitis	Discharges from nose and throat	Respiratory droplets	Through mouth and nose
Syphilis	Lesions Blood Transfer through placenta to fetus	Kissing or sexual intercourse Contaminated needles and syringes	Directly into blood and tissues through breaks in skin or membrane Contaminated needles and syringes
Trachoma	Discharges from infected eyes	Cutaneous contact Hands, towels, handkerchiefs	Directly on conjunctiva
Tuberculosis, bovine		Milk from infected cow	Mouth to intestine
Tuberculosis, human	Sputum Lesions Feces	Droplet infection from person coughing with mouth uncovered Sputum from mouth to fingers, thence to food and other things	Through nose to lungs or intestines From intestines via lymph channels to lymph vessels and to tissues
Typhoid fever	Feces and urine	Food or water contaminated with feces, or urine from patients	Through mouth via infected food or water and thence to intestinal tract

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