

However, by washing hands thoroughly in public settings and using anti-microbial rinses, we can reduce the risk of transmission significantly.

***What can be done right now?***

***The use of an anti-microbial hand rinse*** is encouraged as an effective means of cleansing hands of pathogens. A Diocesan protocol has been developed for those who participate in worship services. All members of the congregation are encouraged to use such a hand rinse before entering the church.

***Receiving in one kind only:*** While Anglicans have asserted since the Reformation that receiving both bread and wine is normal practice within our Church, current practice allows for receiving the bread only.

Therefore, those who are fearful or anxious about receiving in both kinds (bread and wine) are encouraged to communicate the bread only.

***The cleaning and storage of purificators and chalices:*** The

Diocese of Toronto has developed procedures for the cleaning of the chalice and purificators. It is important that all parishes follow those procedures. Copies of these procedures are available through the Diocesan Center.

***Parishioners who have a cold or are feeling ill should be encouraged to remain at home and arrange for their parish priest to visit with communion.***

**It must be stressed that the present use of the common cup and the exchange of peace do not pose a significant health hazard. Common sense and basic hygiene are our best defence.**

References:  
SARS Working Group of the Diocese of Toronto  
The Anglican Church Women of Canada  
The World Council of Churches

**For information contact the Co-ordinator of Chaplaincy Services, Diocese of Toronto, 416-363-6021 ext 236.**



**Diocese of Toronto**  
Anglican Church of Canada

***Liturgical Practice  
and the  
Risk of Contagion***

***Risk of transmission:***

Heightened awareness of the public health implications of communicable diseases (e.g. SARS) has raised concerns about hygiene and questions relating to the risk of transmission of contagion via the common cup and the liturgical practice of exchanging the peace.

Fear of communicable diseases is an aspect of our human nature. By addressing our fears, we can reduce levels of anxiety and make judgements as to how we wish to participate in our worship services.

***What is the risk of transmission of infection?***

It is important to recognize that there are general principles which govern the transmission of infection.

***The chain of infection:*** For disease to spread there needs to be a route or chain which allows the pathogen to spread. The links in this chain are: an infectious agent, a source or reservoir of the agent, a means of exit, a method of transmission, a port of entry and of course a susceptible new host. An

example would be: a person with a cold coughs into his hand and shakes the hand of another person who rubs her eye and then “catches” the same cold.

Breaking the chain of infection reduces or eliminates the risk of transmission.

***Degree of exposure:*** Our defences against stray bacteria are immense and can only be overwhelmed by very large numbers of infectious agents. Each infective agent has its own virulence, and each individual has her/his own “host factors” which determine that person’s susceptibility to infection. The interaction of these two determines the risk of infection for the individual.

***What is the risk?*** Risk is relative. Every day we engage in the risk- filled business of daily living. We shake hands, attend theatres, walk in public places, and possibly share a cup or utensil. All of these interactions involve the risk of exposure to disease. However, in all of these ordinary acts, **the risk of exposure** sufficient to cause infection is minimal.

***The common cup and act of intinction:*** Science confirms that sharing a common cup is a route for the transmission of pathogens. However, if

simple precautions are adopted, risk can be reduced significantly.

**Science and current infectious disease research teach us that, while there is risk of transmission of disease in sharing the common cup, such a risk is minimal and well within the norms of daily behaviour.**

Intinction, long thought to be a practice which reduces the risk of contagion, may actually increase such risk. Hands, (children’s and adults’) are at least as likely a source of contagion as lips (often more so) . Dipping the wafer into the wine may contaminate the wine with pathogens clinging to fingers, thus spreading contagion to others. **Intinction offers no additional protection to the communicant.**

***A handshake:*** Shaking someone’s hand is one of the most common human behaviours we know. It symbolizes the act of welcome, it is a sign of friendship and it is a reflection of the bonds of a community. It is also a means of passing on disease.

We cannot stop shaking hands.