



Tools for Education

BOOK REVIEW

The Germ Freak's Guide to Outwitting Colds and Flu

Janse, A., & Gerba, C. (2005). Deerfield Beach, FL: Health Communications. Telephone: (800) 851-9100; www.hcibooks.com; 194 pages; \$9.55.

Germ freaks unite! Now that flu season is almost over and a pandemic influenza has been averted (hopefully) comes a humorous, light-hearted book about the fine art of avoiding germs. The authors define a germ freak as: someone who is microbe aware; a person who seeks to avoid and contain the spread of bad germs for his or her personal health and that of others; and one who detests being coughed or sneezed upon. Well, that probably accounts for most home care and hospice professionals. Being the co-author of the *Infection Control in Home Care and Hospice* book, I would meet the authors' criteria for being considered a germ freak.

It is for that reason that I enjoyed reading this book. What I enjoyed the most about this book is the authors' comedic style and candor. To give you a sense of its style, in one section there is a question posed: Should I eat lunch at my office desk? The answer: In terms of germs, it's

better to eat off the toilet. The book is divided into three sections. The first section provides the basics on how to avoid germs; the second part is how to avoid germs in different places such as the supermarket, public bathroom, nail salon, and hotels; and the last section is how to help your children avoid germs.

The book is not all about offering tips to encourage compulsive behavior to avoid germs. It does provide sound, practical advice, such as you don't need to use antibacterial products unless you work in a healthcare setting or you are immunocompromised; and instructions regarding the use of respiratory hygiene; the importance of hand washing; and the judicious use of antibiotics. These are all sound principles for everyone to follow.

For the home care and hospice manager, this book is not an infection control textbook and would be considered a "light," humorous read about the topic of infection prevention and control intended for the layperson. The book is reasonably priced and as such could be used as a "give away" or door prize at the next mandatory infection control inservice. This book is a nice change of pace from the heavy technical reading that we all have about a topic that is important to all of us—keeping our home care and hospice patients free from infection. ■

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