

HAND WASHING

Hand washing is a simple thing and it's the best way to prevent infection and illness.

Clean hands prevent infections. Keeping hands clean prevents illness at home, at school, and at work. Hand hygiene practices are key prevention tools in healthcare settings, in daycare facilities, in schools and public institutions, and for the safety of our food.

Wash Your Hands: The Right Way

Follow the five steps below to wash your hands the right way every time:

1. Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
2. Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
3. Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend.
4. Rinse hands well under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Washing your hand with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs.

If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast-acting.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand
- Rub hands together
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry

When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after tending to someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound

Adapted from the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) ["Wash Your Hands"](#) feature