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## HAND WASHING

### A simple way to prevent infection

Throughout the day you accumulate germs on your hands from a variety of sources, such as direct contact with people, contaminated surfaces, foods, even animals and animal waste. If you don't wash your hands frequently enough, you can infect yourself with these germs by touching your eyes, nose or mouth. You can also spread these germs to others by touching them or by touching surfaces or food that they also touch, such as doorknobs, phones.

Infectious diseases are often spread through hand-to-hand contact include common cold, flu (including H1N1), gastrointestinal illness including infectious diarrhea.

Inadequate hand hygiene also contributes to food-related illness such as E. coli and salmonella amongst others. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as many as 76 million each year get some sort of food-borne illness. Many of these can be prevented by simple hand washing.

### HAND WASHING TECHNIQUES:

- 1) **Soap & Water** – regular soap is just as effective as antibacterial soaps at killing/removing germs. Using antibacterial soaps may lead to the development of bacteria resistant to these products making it harder to kill them in the future.
  - o Place your hands together under running water (warm if possible, but not hot or you will dry out your hands).
  - o Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid soap or use clean bar soap. Lather well.
  - o Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 20 seconds.
  - o Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
  - o Rinse well.
  - o Dry your hands completely with a clean or disposable towel.
  - o Pat your skin instead of rubbing to avoid chapping and drying your skin.
  - o If you use a disposable towel throw it in the trash.
  - o Use a towel to turn off the faucet.
  
- 2) **Alcohol-based hand sanitizer** – alcohol-based hand sanitizers are actually more effective than soap and water in killing bacteria and viruses that cause disease. Buyers beware when purchasing hand sanitizers they are not all created equally. Only buy products that state they contain at least 60% alcohol otherwise they may not be effective.
  - o Apply about 1/2 teaspoon of the product to the palm of your hand.
  - o Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces of your hands, until they're dry.

If your hands are visibly dirty, however, wash with soap and water, if available, rather than a sanitizer.



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## WHEN SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

Always wash your hands:

- After using the toilet
- After changing a diaper — wash the diaper-wearer's hands, too
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Before and after preparing food, especially before and immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
- Before eating
- After blowing your nose
- After coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Before and after treating wounds or cuts
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- After handling garbage
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- When using public restrooms, such as those in airports, train stations, bus stations, restaurants and schools

## TEACH YOUR KIDS PROPER HAND WASHING TECHNIQUES

- Teach by example – wash your hands with your children and supervise their hand washing
- Place hand washing reminders at children's eye level
- Visual aids – print out a [poster](#) outlining proper hand washing techniques and place in the bathroom; show your children a [video](#) about proper hand washing
- Ensure your child's school, kindergarten or day care teaches proper hand washing techniques and also abides by these on a daily basis – if children are required to wash their hands regularly throughout the day not only before eating
- Make sure that the sink in the bathroom is easily accessible by children and place a stool underneath it if necessary
- Tell your children to wash their hands as long as it takes them to sing their ABC's, Row Row Row your Boat, or the Happy Birthday song
- Older children can use alcohol-based hand sanitizers and can take them to school to use (make sure to teach them the proper use using only a little bit each time and not touching anything until the sanitizer is completely dry)
- Younger children may also use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if supervised by an adult (you want to make sure the child does not eat the hand sanitizer)