

Hand Washing Saves Lives

Did you know that the very simple activity of frequent hand washing has the potential to save more lives than any single vaccine or medical intervention? It is one of the most effective and inexpensive ways to prevent diarrheal diseases and pneumonia, which cause more than 3.5 million deaths worldwide in children under the age of 5 every year. Although people around the world clean their hands with water, very few use soap to wash their hands.



When should you wash your hands?

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After touching garbage

What is the right way to wash your hands?

- Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry.



Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs.

Hand sanitizers are not effective when hands are visibly dirty.

How should you use hand sanitizer?

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

Information from the CDC and found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/>