

Wash Your Hands

Center for Disease Control Guidelines

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick.



Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community.

When should you wash your hands?

You can help yourself and others stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when germs are likely to get on your hands and can easily spread to others:

- **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?



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

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

- **Scrub** 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 clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

What should you do if you don't have soap and clean, running water?



Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **NOT** get rid of all types of germs.

Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy. Furthermore, hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals like pesticides and heavy metals from hands. Be cautious when using hand sanitizers around children; swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if a person swallows more than a couple mouthfuls.

How do you use hand sanitizers?

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry

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Regular handwashing, particularly before and after certain activities, is one of the best ways to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others. It's quick, it's simple, and it can keep us all from getting sick. Handwashing is a win for everyone, except the germs.

More information at www.cdc.gov

Reference:

Center for Disease Control and Prevention, When and How to Wash Your Hands, March 7, 2016