

Hand Hygiene

Adherence to good hand hygiene techniques has consistently demonstrated a reduction in disease transmission in school settings which can result in less illness and fewer missed school days. [Handwashing](#), when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable disease. Germs (viruses, bacteria, and other infectious particles) can be spread on the hands of children and adults; therefore, frequent handwashing is recommended to wash away germs that have been picked up from other people or from contaminated surfaces.

Handwashing Facts

1. Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections. Germs can spread from person to person or from surfaces to people when you:
 - Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
 - Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
 - Touch surfaces or objects that have germs on them
 - Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects
2. Scientific studies show that you need to scrub for 20 seconds with soap and water to remove harmful germs and chemicals from your hands. If you wash for a shorter time, you will not remove as many germs.
 - Wetting your hands with clean water before applying soap helps you get a better lather than applying soap to dry hands.
 - When you rinse your hands, you wash the germs and chemicals down the drain.
3. Contaminated hands are one of the most common sources for the spread of germs.
 - Adults should wash their hands after either using the bathroom or assisting a child, after changing a diaper, before and after treating a cut, before preparing or serving meals/snacks, before and after eating, after wiping a child's nose, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, before giving medications, after touching garbage, after touching an animal and at any other times deemed necessary.
 - Children should wash their hands after toileting, before and after eating, after blowing their nose, coughing or sneezing into hands, before and after involvement in sensory activities (playing with clay-like materials, playing in a water table, etc.), after playing with animals, and at other times deemed necessary.
4. Alcohol-based hand rubs with at least 60% alcohol are effective in reducing the bacteria on hands but do not eliminate all types of germs, including some germs that cause

diarrhea. Alcohol-based hand rubs can be used as an option for hand hygiene unless hands are visibly soiled, have protein-based material on them or are greasy. Soap and water are always recommended for visibly soiled hands, after using the toilet and after handling trash.

Handwashing Procedure

1. Turn on water. Wet hands thoroughly. Turn off water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Lather the soap in your hands by rubbing them together and move your fingers back and forth, paying attention to the thumb and areas between the fingers. Attention should be given to the whole hand including the area under the fingernails, the wrists, and the backs of hands.
4. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Humming the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice is about 20 seconds.
5. Rinse hands well under clean, running water.
6. Dry hands with a paper towel from a dispenser or air dry.
7. Turn off the faucet with the used towel.
8. Dispose of paper towel.

Hand Sanitizer Procedure

1. Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
2. Cover all surfaces of hands.
3. Rub your hands and fingers together until they are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Caution! Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizer can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Keep it out of reach of young children and supervise their use.

References

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