

## Antibacterial Gels/ Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizers

Antibacterial gels are very effective at killing germs on hands as long as your hands are not visibly dirty. They should be used when soap and water are not available.

To use correctly:

Apply gel to palm of one hand, rub hands together and cover all surfaces of the hands, fingers, and fingernails. Rub until hands are dry. When using alcohol handrubs, you have used enough (about 1/2 tsp) if it takes 25-30 seconds to dry on your hands.

When to use:

- Use for routine cleaning of hands anytime hands are not visibly dirty,
- Before or after you care for, or have contact with, someone very old or very young,
- After you touch another person's skin (shaking hands, holding hands, especially when the other person has a cold or other illness), or
- Whenever you want to decontaminate your hands.



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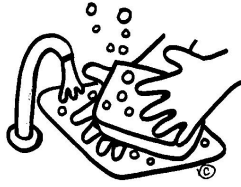
# CLEAN HANDS

**The Importance  
of Handwashing**



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## Why is handwashing important?



When done correctly, handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and infections. Good handwashing technique is easy to learn and can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases among both children and adults.

### When should I wash my hands?

Some important times to remember to wash are...

- After: Using the bathroom; blowing your nose, sneezing, or coughing; handling uncooked meat; taking out the trash; changing a diaper; handling money; playing with a pet
- Before: eating or handling food.

Try not to touch your mouth, eyes, or nose when hands are unwashed.

Disease-causing germs and viruses are passed by such routine things as handling food, touching doorknobs, shaking hands, and putting your mouth on a telephone receiver.

When in doubt...wash!

## How does good handwashing prevent diseases?

Handwashing can stop three of the main ways in which diseases spread between people:

### 1. Fecal-oral transmission.

Because diseases such as, shigellosis, hepatitis A, giardiasis, enterovirus, and campylobacteriosis are spread through the ingestion of even minute (tiny) fecal material, it is very important to wash hands right after going to the restroom.

### 2. Indirect contact with respiratory secretions.

Because diseases such as, influenza (flu), streptococcus, and the common cold may be spread indirectly by hands freshly soiled by the respiratory secretions of infected people, illness may be avoided by washing hands after coughing or sneezing.

### 3. Contact with body fluids.

Urine, saliva and other moist body substances can spread microbes including typhoid, staphylococcal organism, and Epstein-Barr virus. These germs can be transmitted from person to person or indirectly by contamination of food or objects such as toys.



## What is good handwashing technique?

There's probably more to good handwashing than you think, so take your time and do it right.

### Follow these simple steps to keep hands clean:

1. Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap.
2. Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather and scrub all surfaces (don't forget the fingernails).
3. Continue for 15-20 seconds—It takes that long for soap and scrubbing action to dislodge stubborn germs. Need a timer? Sing the "ABC's" in your head or "Happy Birthday" twice.
4. Rinse hands well under warm running water.
5. Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the bathroom door.

### Teach the Kids

Don't assume the kids know how to wash their hands properly. Even though hands may look clean, they often carry germs or microorganisms that are capable of causing disease. Showing them and helping them is the best way to form good habits in children.