

HANDWASHING: DO'S AND DON'TS

Hand-washing is an easy way to prevent infection. Understand when to wash your hands, how to properly use hand sanitizer and how to get your children into the habit.

Source: Mayo Clinic



Always wash your hands before:

- Preparing food or eating
- Treating wounds, giving medicine, or caring for a sick or injured person
- Inserting or removing contact lenses

Always wash your hands after:

- Preparing food, especially raw meat or poultry
- Using the toilet or changing a diaper
- Touching an animal or animal toys, leashes or waste
- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Treating wounds or caring for a sick or injured person
- Handling garbage, household or garden chemicals, or anything that could be contaminated — such as a cleaning cloth or soiled shoes
- Shaking hands with others
- Whenever they look dirty.

How to wash your hands

It's generally best to wash your hands with soap and water. Follow these simple steps:

- Wet your hands with running water — either warm or cold.
- Apply liquid, bar or powder soap.
- Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Remember to scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel or air dryer.
- If possible, use a towel or your elbow to turn off the faucet.

How to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers, which don't require water, are an acceptable alternative when soap and water aren't available. If you use a hand sanitizer, make sure the product contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Then follow these simple steps:

- Apply enough of the product to the palm of your hand to wet your hands completely.
- Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces, until your hands are dry.

Kids need clean hands, too

Help children stay healthy by encouraging them to wash their hands properly and frequently. Wash your hands with your child to show him or her how it's done. To prevent rushing, suggest washing hands for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. If your child can't reach the sink on his or her own, keep a step stool handy.

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