

Hand Washing Awareness

Hand washing is the simple and best way to prevent infections and illnesses. Good hand hygiene practices are key prevention tools at work, in healthcare settings, in daycare facilities, in schools and public institutions, and for the safety of our food.

Hand washing can prevent infection and illness from spreading from person to person and sometimes throughout the community. The basic rules are to wash hands before preparing food and after handling uncooked meat and poultry, before eating, after changing diapers, after coughing, sneezing, or blowing one's nose into a tissue, after using the bathroom, and after touching animals or anything in the animal environment.

Wash Your Hands: The Right Way

When washing hands with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap-use warm water if it is available.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces
- Continue rubbing hands for 15-20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Always use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.

When using an alcohol-based sanitizer:

If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on the skin and are fast-acting.

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

For more information on hand-washing and other food safety issues, please call 1800-CDC-INFO 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or visit www.cdc.gov.