



INTERNATIONAL INFECTION PREVENTION WEEK

October 14th-20th, 2007

The Department Of Juvenile Justice is asking you to join ALL of US to help reduce infectious disease spread by our hands. We are asking that you make a concerted effort to promote the importance of hand washing to give all of us a head start to prevent illness this winter. Help spread the word not the germs by making hand washing and hand awareness a habit.



Ensuring that employees wash their hands properly after using the washroom is very important in reducing disease transmission of stomach "flu's" (which really is not a "flu" or influenza), gastrointestinal infections and Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA). Staph or MRSA infections in the community are usually manifested as skin infections, such as pimples and boils, and occur in otherwise healthy people. Improved adherence to hand hygiene (i.e. hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand rubs) has been shown to terminate outbreaks and reduce transmission of antimicrobial resistant organisms (e.g. Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus) and reduce overall infection rates. [Click on this link for more information on Community Acquired MRSA.](#)

Hand Washing

"Wash your hands!" How many times have you heard that from your parents? You might think they are just nagging you, but actually, the most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), if you do not wash your hands frequently, you can pick up germs from other sources and then infect yourself. You are at risk every time you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. In fact, one of the most common ways people catch colds is by rubbing their nose or their eyes after the cold virus has gotten on their hands.

If people do not wash their hands frequently (especially when they're sick), they can spread germs directly to other people or onto surfaces that others touch. Before you know it, everyone around you is coming down with something! [Click on this link for the CDC Hand Hygiene Guidelines Fact Sheet.](#)

The First Line of Defense Against Germs

Think about all of the things that you touched today - from the telephone to the toilet. Maybe you blew your nose and played with your dog. Whatever you did, you were exposed to germs. Therefore, it is easy for germs on your hand to end up in your mouth (maybe when you scarfed that handful of popcorn with your co-workers after lunch).

By frequently washing your hands the right way, you'll wash away germs - such as bacteria and viruses - that you have picked up from other people, through contaminated water and food, from tainted surfaces, or from animals and animal waste.

Defensive Hand Washing

Did you know that an estimated 1 out of 5 people don't wash their hands after using the restroom? In 2005, the American Society for Microbiology did a survey of hand washing.

- People do not always wash their hands after using the bathroom - 91% of adults say they always wash their hands after using public restrooms, but just 83% were seen doing so.
- People wash their hands less at home - 83% say they wash their hands after using the bathroom at home. Germs are germs, and a bathroom is a bathroom.
- Only 32% of people in the survey said they wash their hands after coughing or sneezing. Therefore, it is nice that you protect the people around you by covering your mouth with your hand when you cough. But, if you then reach for your friend's pizza, you might as well not have bothered.
- Just 21% wash their hands after handling money.

When Should You Wash Your Hands?

- after using the bathroom
- after blowing your nose or coughing
- before eating, serving, or preparing food
- after touching pets or other animals
- after outdoor activities
- after visiting anyone who's sick
- when your hands are dirty
- after changing a diaper

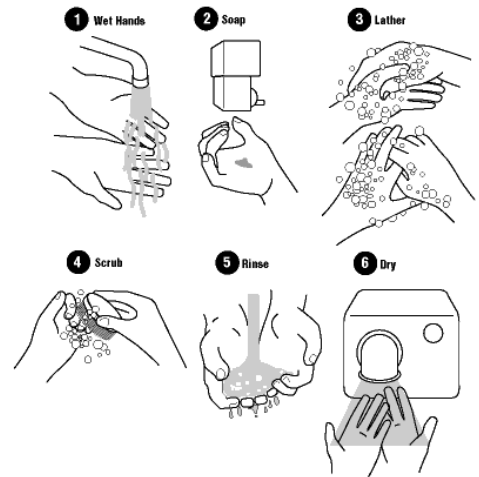
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- ☑ Only 42% of the people in the survey washed up after petting a dog or cat. You have seen your dog roll in that mystery smell in the park or your cat rub against you after using the litter pan. Fido and Fluffy are dirtier than you think.

How to Wash Your Hands Correctly

There is a right way to wash your hands. A splash of water and a drop or two of soap will not do the trick. Follow these simple steps to keep your hands clean:

1. Use warm water (not cold or hot).
2. Use whatever soap you like. Antibacterial soaps are popular but regular soap works fine. If you suspect that your hands have been exposed to someone with an infection, think about using an alcohol hand sanitizer.
3. Rub your hands together vigorously and scrub all surfaces: Lather up on both sides of your hands, your wrists, between your fingers.
4. Scrub your fingernails.
Wash for 15 seconds - about how long it takes to sing a few verses of "Happy Birthday."
5. Rinse well under warm running water,
6. Air dry or pat dry with a clean towel.

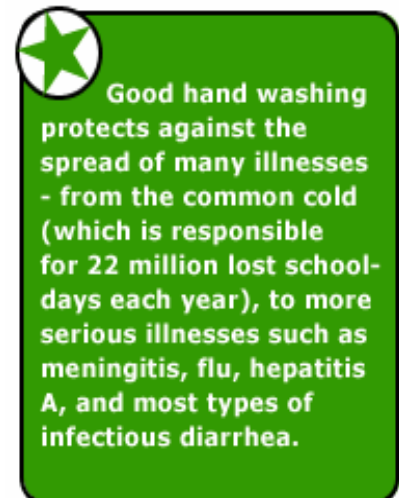


- ☑ ***In public restrooms, consider using a paper towel to flush the toilet and open the door because toilet and door handles harbor germs. Throw the towel away after you leave.***
- ☑ ***To prevent chapping or dry skin, use a mild soap with warm water, pat rather than rub hands dry, and apply a moisturizing lotion liberally afterwards.***
- ☑ ***When there is no soap or water available, waterless hand soaps or scrubs are a good alternative. They are usually available as a liquid, wipes, or towelettes, and often come in small travel sizes that are perfect for keeping in your book bag, car, locker, purse, or sports bag.***

What about antibacterial soaps and waterless hand scrubs?

While it is true that regular soap and water does not actually kill microorganisms (they create a slippery surface that allows the organisms to "slide off"), antibacterial soaps are typically considered "overkill" for most purposes. The exception may be in a hospital where special situations are present (e.g., before invasive procedures, when caring for severely immuno-compromised patients, critical care areas, intensive care nurseries, etc.). Antibacterial agents should be chosen carefully based on their active ingredients and characteristics, and when persistent antimicrobial activity on the hands is desired.

When there is no soap or water available, one alternative is to use waterless hand scrubs. Some of these products are made of ethyl alcohol mixed with emollients (skin softeners) and other agents. They are often available as a rinse, or on wipes or towelettes. Paramedics home care attendants, or other mobile workers can use them where hand-washing facilities are not available. However, these agents are not effective when the hands are heavily contaminated with dirt, blood, or other organic materials. In addition, waterless hand scrubs may have a drying effect on the skin and may have odors, which may be irritating to some users.



Remember, proper and frequent hand washing is the key to preventing the spread of many common infections. So, hum a few verses of "Happy Birthday" and lather up!

Article contents from: <http://www.cdc.gov/>; <http://www.henrythehand.com/>; www.kidshealth.org/