



Keep Kids Healthy

Question: What's the best way to keep adults and children from getting sick?

Answer: Wash your hands!



You've heard it said a thousand times since you were a child, but many people still don't wash their hands as often as they should. In a recent study, 94% of American adults said they wash their hands after using the restroom. But the study found that only 68% of the people washed after they used a public restroom.

What's the Big Deal?

Germs are everywhere: on people, on toys, doorknobs, tables, and on animals. You pick up the germs on your hands, and then infect yourself when you touch your eyes, your nose, or your mouth. You can spread germs when you touch the children or things they touch. Before you know it, you and all the children are sick. The most impor-

tant thing you can do to keep you and the children from getting sick is to wash hands.

When Should You Wash?

You can't see or smell germs. They can be on your hands and you don't know it. You should wash your hands often to get rid of the germs.

These are the most important times to wash:

- Before touching food
- Before feeding a baby
- After touching raw meat
- After changing diapers or helping a child to use the toilet
- After wiping a runny nose
- After using the toilet
- After playing with pets
- When your hands are dirty

When Should Children Wash?

- Before eating or touching food
- After eating (especially for children who eat with their hands)
- After having a diaper changed
- After using the toilet
- After playing outside or in sand
- After playing with pets
- After wiping a runny nose
- When their hands are dirty

Washing hands is the most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick.

The Best Way to Wash

Follow these steps for proper handwashing:

1. Wet your hands under warm running water.
2. Put on some soap and rub hands together for 10–15 seconds. Be sure to scrub between your fingers and both sides of your hands.
3. Rinse hands under warm running water. Leave the water on as you dry.
4. Dry hands with a clean paper towel.
5. Place the paper towel on the faucet handle to turn it off. (Remember, dirty hands turned the faucet on.)
6. Throw the towel away.

Washing Baby's Hands

1. Wash a baby's hands with plain soap and a clean, warm, wet cloth.
2. Rinse the cloth in warm water or get another clean, warm, wet cloth to rinse baby's hands.
- 3 Dry hands well.



Sing the “ABC Song” or “Happy Birthday” as you wash hands.

How Long is 15 Seconds?

Many people don't take time to wash long enough. To make sure you're washing long enough, sing the “ABC Song” or “Happy Birthday” while you and the children wash. You may want to make up your own handwashing song. When the song ends, hands should be clean. Most children love to sing as they wash their hands.

What about Antibacterial Soaps?

You don't need to use antibacterial soap to do a good job of handwashing. Regular soap and warm water work very well. Some researchers think that antibacterial soaps may do more harm than good, killing the helpful as well as the harmful bacteria.

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