



HAND WASHING

One of the most important things that you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands.

One of the most common ways to become ill is by rubbing your nose, eyes or mouth after your hands have been contaminated with viruses. By frequently washing your hands you wash away viruses that can be picked up from other people, or from contaminated surfaces, or from animals.

It is especially important to wash your hands

- Before, during, and after you prepare food
- Before you eat, and after you use the bathroom
- After handling animals or animal waste
- When your hands are dirty, and
- More frequently when someone in your home or workplace is sick.

The correct way to wash your hands with soap and water is:

1. Wet your hands with warm water and apply liquid or clean bar soap.
2. Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces, including nails.
3. Continue for 10 - 15 seconds (about the time it takes to say the ABC's or sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"). It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs.
4. Rinse well and dry your hands.

If you do not have soap and water available, and your hands are not visibly dirty, you can also use an alcohol-based gel cleanser. To use this product correctly:

1. Apply enough cleanser to open palms to keep hands moist for 15 seconds.
2. Rub hands together palm to palm, and rub product in between and around fingers, the backs of your hands, each thumb and the tips of your fingers.
3. Keep rubbing until hands are dry.

Posters that demonstrate cleaning hands with soap and water, or sanitizer can be found on the [Tools](#) page.