

Hand washing: A simple way to prevent infection and stay healthy

Hand washing doesn't take much time or effort, but it offers great rewards in terms of preventing illnesses. Resolve today to adopt this simple habit as a way to help protect your health.

The combination of scrubbing your hands with soap and rinsing them with water loosens and removes bacteria from your hands.

Proper hand washing with soap and water

Follow these instructions for washing with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid or clean bar soap. Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 20 seconds.
- 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.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet.

When should you wash your hands?

Always wash your hands:

- After using the bathroom
- After changing a diaper — wash the diaper-wearer's hands, too
- After touching animals or animal waste
- Before and after preparing food, especially before and immediately after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
- Before eating
- After blowing your nose
- After coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Before and after treating wounds or cuts
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- After handling garbage
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- When using public restrooms, such as those in airports, train stations, bus stations and restaurants.