

# Why is Handwashing Important?

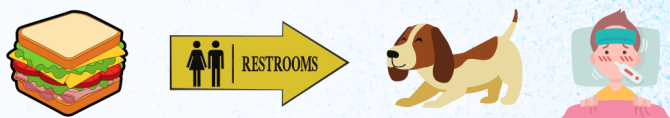


**The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates over 350,000 people died from respiratory infections caused by unsafe hand hygiene in 2019.\***

Hand washing is one of the best ways to prevent spreading germs, including those that cause the common cold, influenza (the flu) and diarrheal infections.



## When to wash hands:



Before and after preparing or eating food

- After using the restroom, changing a diaper or assisting a child in the restroom
- After coughing, blowing your nose or sneezing
- After touching an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- After caring for someone ill
- Before and after treating a cut or wound



## How to wash hands properly:

1. Wet hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
2. Rub hands together with soap, including the backs of hands, between fingers and under nails.
3. Scrub for at least 20 seconds (minimum).
4. Rinse hands with clean, running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean towel, paper towel or a hand dryer.



## Soap



Bar soap or liquid soap both remove germs from your hands. Antibacterial soap is not any better than plain soap at preventing the spread of germs and therefore not recommended for handwashing outside of healthcare settings.

## Water Temperature



Water that is warm or cold will work the same when washing hands since the water itself does not kill germs. Water helps create a lather with soap to remove germs from hands.



**Hand sanitizer is not a replacement for soap and water, since there are certain germs hand sanitizer cannot kill.**

**However, if no soap and water is available, use a hand sanitizer containing a minimum of 60% alcohol. Keep hand sanitizer out of reach of children, since these can cause alcohol poisoning if swallowed. Children are more likely to swallow hand sanitizers that are scented, colorful or in attractive packaging.**



\*Source: World Health Organization

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