



Preventing Infection with Good Hand Hygiene

No place can be completely free of germs – even hospitals and other health care settings. But you can partner with your caregivers and take steps to lessen the presence of germs.

Hand hygiene plays a major role in preventing the spread of diseases.

Where do germs hide?

Here are just a few of their hiding places:

- Hands (1,500 germs per centimeter)
- Work desks (21,000 germs per square inch)
- Kitchen sink (worse than bathroom)
- Dishcloth, sponge
- Faucet handles (229,000 germs per square inch)
- Light switches, remote controls, keyboards, bathroom doorknobs, escalator handrails, shopping cart handles
- Toys, pens, pencils and crayons
- Hospital surfaces such as bed rails, bedside tables, and phones

“Handwashing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infections.”

– U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

How can you help prevent the spread of these germs?

- Cleanse your hands regularly with soap and water or hand sanitizer. This will:
 - Help protect you from many illnesses caused by viruses or bacteria.
 - Remove germs you pick up when you touch people, animals or surfaces. If not removed, these germs can get into your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Remind your caregivers about hand hygiene. We sometimes forget, and we welcome your friendly reminder to wash our hands or use gel before examining you or giving a medication.
- Remind your visitors to cleanse their hands.

When to wash

- After going to the toilet or changing diapers
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
- Before eating, including ready-to-eat foods
- After touching animals or their waste
- After touching sores, cuts or infected areas
- After getting visible soil on hands or playing/working outside
- Before and after handling raw meat/poultry or unwashed fruits and veggies
- Before taking medications
- Before putting contact lenses in the eyes

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How to wash

To remove 99.9% of the germs on your hands:

- Wet your hands with clean water.
- Apply soap.
- Rub your hands together vigorously and scrub all surfaces.
- Scrub for 15-20 seconds (Sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice).
- Rinse with clean water.
- Dry your hands briskly.
- Turn off water with a towel. If possible, do not touch the door handle as you leave the restroom.

How to use alcohol-based hand rubs

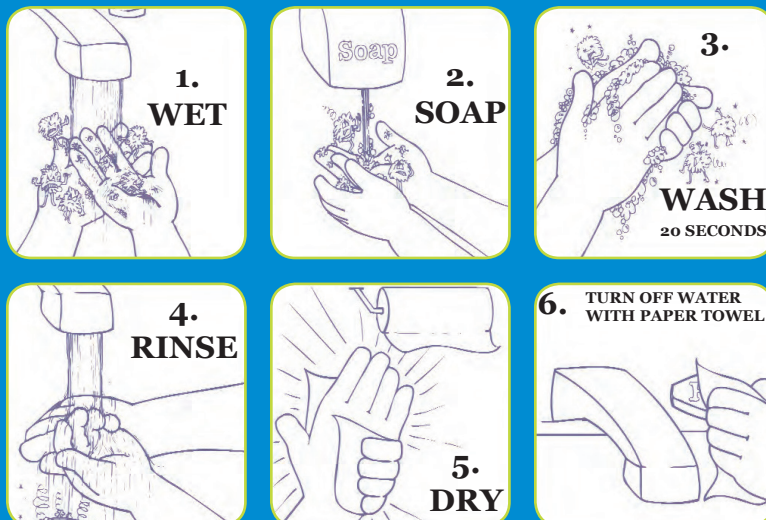
If soap and water are not available, use an alcoholbased handrub (wipes or gel). The product should contain 60%-95% ethanol or isopropanol alcohol.

- Follow directions on the bottle for how much product to use.
- Rub your hands together, covering all surfaces, until they are dry. This should take about 15 seconds. Be sure to include under fingernails, around cuticles and bases of the thumbs.
- Do not rinse with water or dry with a towel.

Hand Hygiene How-To

Does it matter how I wash my hands?

You have to rub your hands for at least 15-20 seconds to get rid of the bacteria. Follow these instructions:



How do I clean my hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer?

Use enough to cover all the surfaces of your hands.



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