



How to Prevent the Spread of Disease With Proper Handwashing

Washing your hands is one of the most effective way of preventing the spread of infection. Running water and friction is all you need to remove harmful microorganisms.

Steps

- 1** Wet your hands thoroughly with clean water.
- 2** Apply soap or detergent to the palm of the hands.
- 3** Rub palm-to-palm, palm-to-backs-of-hands, and interlaced fingers for at least 30 seconds--concentrate carefully under fingernails and the finger webs. Work up a lather.
- 4** Rinse hands with clean water until all the soap residue is gone.
- 5** Pat or rub your hands dry. You can also air dry your hands.
- 6** Repeat these steps every time...^[1]
 - Before and after preparing food (especially after preparing with raw meat or poultry)
 - Before eating
 - Before and after treating wounds
 - Before giving medicine
 - Before and after touching a sick or injured person
 - Before inserting or removing contact lenses
 - After using the toilet
 - After changing a diaper
 - After touching an animal or animal toys, leashes or waste
 - After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands
 - After handling garbage or something that could be contaminated, such as a cleaning cloth or soiled shoes

Tips

- To ensure 30 seconds, sing Mary Had a Little Lamb twice.

Things You'll Need

- Running warm (not hot) water
- Basic hand soap (preferably liquid)
- Paper towel

Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/hand-washing/HQ00407>