

HANDWASHING SAVES LIVES

Studies Show that Only 67% of People Practice Hand Hygiene

80% of Communicable Diseases are Transferred by Touch

Every day we touch hundreds of things that have millions of bacteria and germs. Keeping our hands clean and using good practices for hygiene is important for not only our individual health but the health of others. Clean hands spread less illness, even a common stomach bug that spreads to a child can be deadly.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of hand washing history, facts, when to wash, and how to wash.

01 | History

It is documented that in the 1800's a doctor by the name of Ignaz Semmelweis oversaw a clinic that had a high mortality rate and performed both autopsies and delivered babies. He suspected that bacteria from the cadavers was causing the infant mortality. He instituted a process that doctors must scrub their hands with a chlorinated lime solution before leaving an autopsy. After this practice was implemented the mortality rate immediately fell 3 percent. While the practice of handwashing took many years to become protocol, it now is widely required for the health and safety of people everywhere.

02 | The Facts

There are endless facts and statistics regarding hygiene and hand washing. You should consider the following to have an understanding of the importance of washing your hands.

- Damp hands are 1,000 times more likely to spread bacteria than dry hands
- Handwashing greatly reduces frequency of illness
- Most bacteria is on the fingertips and under the nails

03 | When to Wash

You should always be mindful of cleanliness especially when it comes to your hands. It is especially important to wash your hands:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food

- **Before** and **after** caring for someone who is sick
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** touching garbage.

04 | How to Wash

The Center for Disease Control maintains the best process for hand washing is as follows:

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water, and apply soap
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with soap, ensuring soap is applied to the backs of your hands, between fingers, and under nails
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean running water
- **Dry** your hands with a clean towel or allow to air dry

What about hand sanitizer? While washing hands with soap and water is the best way to cleanse your hands, hand sanitizer that is 60% or more alcohol is acceptable to help combat germs.

For more information on the importance of hygiene, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/>

Did You Know?

Handwashing can reduce the risk of respiratory infections by 16%

References

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/fact-sheets.html>