

How Should You Wash Your Hands?

How you wash your hands is just as important as *when* you wash them, especially when it comes to eliminating germs. Just rinsing them quickly is not enough. When you wash your hands:

- Wet hands under comfortably hot, running water.
- Apply soap.
- Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers, between fingers and under the fingernails. (Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds —sing *Happy Birthday* twice).
- Rinse thoroughly under comfortably hot, running water.
- Dry hands using a disposable towel or hot-air dryer. (Use towel to shut off water and turn door handle.)
- Apply hand lotion after washing to help prevent and soothe dry skin as needed.



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Community
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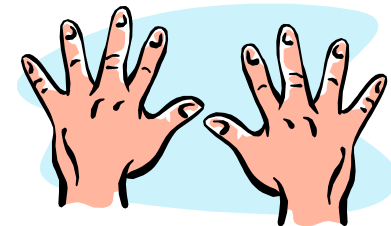
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Handwashing

Highlights



The Importance of Handwashing

Washing your hands is the simplest, most effective thing you can do to reduce the spread of colds, flu, diarrhea, and sometimes even serious or life-threatening diseases. You don't need any special cleansers or cleaning equipment — just soap, water and “elbow grease” — and you can even get rid of the germs that have learned to survive powerful antibiotics. That's why the U.S. Centers for Disease Control states that handwashing is one of the most effective tools we have in the battle against infectious diseases. To prevent foodborne illness, it is important to wash your hands thoroughly and often. Even though your hands may look clean, they are probably not germ-free.

Germs are picked up easily, so think of your hands as always contaminated. The number one source of food contamination is bacteria carried on hands. Remember gloves and hand sanitizers are not substitutes for handwashing.



Don't Get Caught Dirty Handed!

If you begin to keep track of when you wash your hands, you may find it's not as often as you think. Unfortunately, not only do many of us fail to wash our hands when we should, but two national surveys over the past four years show that wherever we are, we wash our hands significantly less than we say we do.

A recent survey in late summer 2000 found that 95 percent of Americans, both men and women, say they always wash their hands after going to the bathroom; but observations in public restrooms show that only 67 percent of adults actually did so. Virtually identical results were found when the same survey was done in 1996.

Why Should You Wash Your Hands?

Germs are so small that you cannot see them. A few of them can cause illnesses like diarrhea, colds and other more serious, sometimes even life-threatening diseases.

If you wash your hands correctly, you will greatly reduce the chances of spreading germs, including those that have changed to protect themselves against an antibiotic, which is called antibiotic resistance. Disease-causing germs can enter your body when your unwashed hands touch your nose, mouth, and open wounds.

As a food service provider, you have a professional responsibility to wash your hands; however, it is important that EVERYONE makes handwashing a personal priority.

When Should You Wash Your Hands?

Before you	Prepare or eat food
	Treat a cut or wound, or tend to someone who is sick
	Insert or remove contact lenses
After you	Go to the bathroom
	Handle uncooked foods, particularly raw meat, poultry or fish
	Change a diaper
	Blow your nose, cough or sneeze
	Handle garbage
	Tend to someone who is sick or injured
	Handle an animal or animal waste