

Preventing the Spread of Disease

Wash Your Hands

Stop the Spread of Germs that Make You and Others Sick!

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to **wash your hands!**

The spread of many illnesses such as the flu, colds, hepatitis A, meningitis and infectious diarrhea can be reduced by washing hands.

Dirty hands spread germs when you touch your eyes, nose or mouth. With frequent hand washing, you wash away germs that you have picked up from other people or contaminated surfaces.

When should you wash your hands?

- OFTEN
- after sneezing or coughing into your hands
- before, during and after you handle food
- before you eat
- after you use the bathroom
- after handling animals
- whenever your hands are dirty
- more frequently when you are around someone who is sick

How should you wash your hands?

1. Use soap and running water when available.
2. Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces, including back of hands, between fingers and underneath fingernails.
3. Continue for 15 – 20 seconds, about the length of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
4. Rinse well.
5. Dry hands.

Alcohol-based Hand Wipes and Gel Sanitizers Work too

1. Rub the gel in your hands until they are dry
2. You don't need water because the alcohol kills the germs