



Wash Your Hands

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Why are adults always saying “Wash Your Hands?” Because it’s one of the simplest ways to stop germs from spreading, and that helps prevent illness. The things we call **germs** are really tiny living things. They are so small you need a microscope to see them. And they are everywhere: on telephones and computer keyboards, on door knobs and toilets. If you don’t wash your hands and you shake someone else’s, or you put your hand in your mouth, you are spreading germs that attack your body and could make you or someone else sick.

You don’t have to wash your hands all day long. But there are a few times that are particularly good:

- Before you eat (even snacks) or touch food (even if you help make the meal)
- After using the bathroom
- After coughing or sneezing or blowing your nose
- After touching animals or animal waste
- After visiting a sick friend or relative
- After playing out doors
- When your hands are just plain dirty

Did you know there are instructions for the best way to wash your hands? Well there are! Here are some things you can do to get your hands really clean every time you wash:

- Use warm water instead of hot or cold
- Wet your hands before you use soap
- Use any soap you like – regular soap is fine, it doesn’t have to be antibacterial
- Work up a lather and rub your hands together for at least 10 seconds
- Rinse off all the soap
- Turn off the water with a paper towel (faucets can have germs on them too)
- Dry your hands with an air-dryer or clean paper towel

Washing your hands will remove dirt and *most* germs. But if you ever have to clean up stuff that is really filled with germs – blood, vomit, or feces – wear gloves. If you have cuts or raw areas on your skin that make it easier for germs to enter your body, use a **disinfectant**. A disinfectant is a cleaning solution that kills bacteria and other germs that cause disease.

Remember: Wash, wash, wash your hands!