

What you can't see CAN hurt you. Germs are everywhere—in the air, in dirt, in water, and even inside us and other animals.

Some germs don't cause problems. Others can make us sick.

Protect your family against foodborne illness by chasing germs away. Better health means fewer doctor's bills and fewer school and work days missed.

Keep things CLEAN to get rid of germs. The first step is to wash your hands. Many people don't wash their hands often enough. They may think that it takes too much time or hurts their skin. They may also think that it really isn't important.

Hand washing DOES make a difference. Your family will have fewer colds and less "flu" if you get rid of germs on your hands.

It's easy!

This is what you'll need in both your kitchen and bathroom to wash your hands.

Water

You need to use enough water to wash the germs away. Water running from a faucet is best. If you need to use a pan instead, make sure that the water is clean.



Soap

Use a bar of soap or liquid soap in a bottle. You don't need special antibacterial soap.



Towel

Paper towels are best. If you use a cloth towel, use a clean one.





Here is the right way to wash your hands

- 1** Turn on the faucet and get your hands wet.



- 2** Put soap on the palm of your hand and rub your hands together to make a lather.



- 3** Continue rubbing soap lather over your hands for 20 seconds (the time that it takes to sing the Happy Birthday song slowly ... "Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you, ...") Don't forget to wash the fronts and backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.



- 4** Rinse your hands under running water to remove all the soap.



- 5** Turn off the faucet with a paper towel, especially if you're using a sink away from home (such as at a movie theater or a bus station).



- 6** Dry your hands on a paper towel or a clean hand towel. Don't finish by wiping your hands on your clothes!



When to wash your hands



Before
you eat.



Before
you cook or
prepare food.

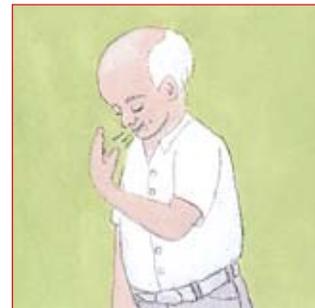


After
you use
the toilet
or change
diapers.



If you are sick with diarrhea, don't prepare food for others. It's hard to get your hands clean enough. You could make someone else sick.

After
you sneeze
or cough.



After
you touch
a pet.



After
you touch
raw meat,
poultry,
fish, or eggs.
These foods can have germs. Germs are killed by cooking.





Questions for Doctor Sal Monella

Do I need to use antibacterial soap?

No. Just plain soap and water will get rid of germs. You don't have to spend extra money on special soap.

Do I really have to wash my hands for 20 seconds?

Yes. Many people don't wash their hands long enough. It takes that much time to get the germs off every part of your hands—including the finger tips.

Do I need to wash my hands every time that I use the toilet?

Yes. Even urine can have germs in it.

I can do laundry only once a week. Is it safe to use the same hand towel all week?

It's best to use a clean towel. If you use a towel often, buy several cheap towels and change them often.

How can I clean my hands when I'm away from a sink?

Soap and running water get rid of germs fast. In an emergency, you could use "towelettes" (small, wet paper towels in packets, for one-time use). Don't use antibacterial lotions instead of washing your hands. You could carry a small bottle of tap water and liquid soap for hand washing before you eat outside.

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