

HANDWASHING

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

The most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of illness is to wash your hands and children's hands thoroughly and often.

This is how you should wash your hands:

- ▶ Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm running water and soap. Make sure you have lots bubbles.
- ▶ Wash under fingernails, between fingers, back of hands and wrists.
- ▶ Rinse your hands well under running water.

In public bathrooms:

- ▶ Dry your hands with a single-use paper towel (or hot air blow dryer).
- ▶ If your towel dispenser has a handle, be sure to roll the paper down before you wash your hands. This helps to insure that you will not pick up new germs from the handle.
- ▶ For hand-held faucets, turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands so you will not pick up new germs on your clean hands. You may want to open the bath room door with the same paper towel and then throw it away.
- ▶ Open the bathroom door with the same paper towel. In the home, change hand washing towels often.

These are times when you should wash your hands:

- ▶ After you use the bathroom or help a child use the bathroom.
- ▶ After you change a diaper.
- ▶ After you handle items soiled with body fluids or wastes such as blood, drool, urine, stool or discharge from nose or eyes.
- ▶ After you clean up messes.
- ▶ After you handle a sick child.
- ▶ Before you prepare or serve food.
- ▶ Before you eat or drink.

Teach and show children how to wash hands correctly. They should wash:

- ▶ After arriving home from daycare, a friend's home, an outing or school.
- ▶ After using the toilet or having their diapers changed.
- ▶ After touching a child who may be sick or have handled soiled items.
- ▶ Before eating or drinking.

(Information adapted from a Minnesota day care manual and Washtenaw County Department of Human Services/Public Health).



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