

Preventing Infection by Washing Hands



Introduction

Keeping yourself and others safe from infection begins by learning how to wash your hands properly. Washing your hands thoroughly and frequently is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs. Make sure others who care for your loved one wash their hands properly as well.

Wash your hands:

- When you return home after being out, such as after trips to the doctor's office, the store or to visit friends.
- Before preparing meals.
- After using the bathroom.
- After contact with someone who is ill.
- After everyday activities such as playing with pets or children, handling money, cleaning the house or doing yard work.
- Before and after contact with body fluids, such as after changing dressings or cleaning wounds, emptying a bedpan or catheter bag.
- After touching someone else.
- Before preparing medications.
- After touching door handles.

Remember To Wash Your Hands Frequently

Hand Washing:

- Use warm running water.
- Lather hands well with soap (liquid if available) and scrub vigorously.
- Pay special attention to nails, between fingers and around rings. Rings can trap germs. It is better to remove rings before hand washing.
- Rinse thoroughly under warm running water.
- Dry with a paper towel or clean, dry cloth. Avoid drying with a previously used cloth towel that can put germs back onto your clean hands.
- When turning off the water, cover the handle with a paper towel.
- Use a mild lotion after washing to prevent dry, cracked skin.

