

A Guide to Hand Washing

Washing Hands

Key Times to Wash Hands

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- ❖ **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- ❖ **Before** eating food
- ❖ **Before and after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- ❖ **Before and after** treating a cut or wound
- ❖ **After** using the toilet
- ❖ **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- ❖ **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- ❖ **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- ❖ **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- ❖ **After** touching garbage

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

- ❖ **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- ❖ **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- ❖ **Scrub** your hands for at least **20 seconds**. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- ❖ **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- ❖ **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Washing Hands Properly



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Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.



During the COVID-19 pandemic, you should also clean hands:

- ❖ After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc.
- ❖ Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.

