

Manheim Township School District
Health Services-Handwashing

Germs are everywhere! They can get onto your hands and items you touch throughout the day. Washing hands at key times with soap and water is one of the most important steps you can take to get rid of germs and avoid spreading germs to those around you.

Handwashing helps prevent infections for these reasons:

- People often touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without realizing it, introducing germs into their bodies.
- Germs from unwashed hands may get into foods and drinks when people prepare or consume them. Germs can grow in some types of foods or drinks and make people sick.
- Germs from unwashed hands can be transferred to other objects, such as door knobs, tables, or toys, and then transferred to another person's hands.



What is the right way to wash your hands?

1. **Wet** your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
3. **Scrub** all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

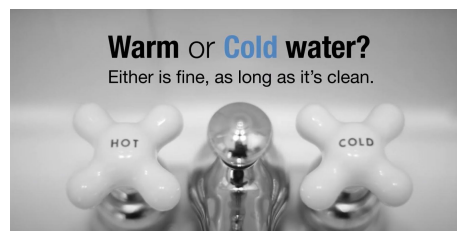
When should you wash your hands?

Handwashing at any time of the day can help get rid of germs, but there are key times when it's most important to wash your hands.

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the bathroom, changing diapers, or cleaning up a child who has used the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal food or treats, animal cages, or animal feces (poop)
- After touching garbage
- If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

What type of soap should you use?

You can use bar soap or liquid soap to wash your hands. Many public places provide liquid soap because it's easier and cleaner to share with others. Studies have not found any added health benefit from using soaps containing antibacterial ingredients when compared with plain soap. Both are equally effective in getting rid of germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



When should I use Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer?

- Before and after visiting a friend or a loved one in a hospital or nursing home, unless the person is sick with *Clostridium difficile* (if so, use soap and water to wash hands).
 - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and wash with soap and water as soon as you can.
- * Do NOT use hand sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty or greasy: for example, after gardening, playing outdoors, or after fishing or camping (unless a handwashing station is not available). Wash your hands with soap and water instead.

Did you know?

Studies have shown that handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu.

For more information, visit the CDC handwashing website, www.cdc.gov/handwashing.
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