

Six Steps to Proper Hand Washing

from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

How you wash your hands is just as important as when you wash them, especially when it comes to eliminating germs. Just rinsing hands quickly is not enough. Follow these steps when you wash your hands:



How to Wash Your Hands

1. **WET** your hands with warm water. Apply plenty of soap.
2. **SCRUB** your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Wash the front and back of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails. Scrubbing your hands together loosens germs and dirt and allows them to be washed away. To be sure you've scrubbed for 20 seconds; try singing "Happy Birthday" to yourself twice while washing hands.
3. **RINSE** your hands.
4. **DRY** your hands with a paper towel.
5. **TURN OFF THE WATER** with a paper towel.

When to Wash Your Hands

- It is especially important to wash your hands:
- After you use the bathroom
- Before you eat
- After sneezing, coughing or using a handkerchief or tissue
- After handling garbage or trash
- Before and after changing a baby's diaper
- After touching any part of the body, the hair or the face; scratching any part of the body, licking hands, etc.
- After handling animals or animal waste