

# HANDWASHING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT WAY TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF GERMS

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## HOW Should I Wash My Hands?

- Wet hands with water first
- Then add soap
- Rub hands together and **use friction on all surfaces** for at least 20 seconds: fingers all the way to the tips, thumbs, palms, and wrists; under rings; focus under nails
- Rinse well under running water, letting water drain from wrist to fingers
- Dry hands thoroughly with a folded paper towel, or let them air-dry
- Use paper towel to turn off faucets and open the door

## WHEN Should I Wash My Hands?

- **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, or any time they are visibly dirty

*\*\*\* If you can't get to soap and water right away, **use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol**, and rub the gel over all of the surfaces of your hands and fingers until they are dry – this should take about 20 seconds. Remember though that some germs, like norovirus and C. diff, are not killed by hands sanitizers, and require a thorough wash with soap and water.\*\*\**

## Other Germ-fighting Tips

- Don't put unwashed hands near your face. Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth without first washing your hands could cause you to get sick.
- If you have to sneeze, cough, or blow your nose, completely cover your mouth and nose with tissue, or with the fabric on the sleeve of your inner arm. If you used your hand or a tissue to cover, go wash your hands immediately with soap and water before touching anything.
- To protect those around you, stay home or visit your healthcare provider if you have symptoms of illness such as a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, prolonged cough, or rash.

\*Handwashing guidance based on information from <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html> and germ-fighting guidance based on information from <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm>