

## When should I wash my hands?

Here are some situations when you should wash your hands to reduce the chance of spreading "germs":

- When hands are visibly dirty or soiled.
- After using the washroom (includes changing diapers).
- After blowing your nose or after sneezing in your hands.
- Before and after eating, handling food, drinking or smoking.
- After touching raw meat, poultry, or fish.
- After handling garbage.
- Before and after visiting or caring for sick people.
- After handling pets, animals or animal waste.
- After touching commonly used public surfaces or shared items.
- After returning home from work, school or outdoor activities.

## How do I properly wash my hands?

For effective hand washing, follow these steps:


- Remove any rings or other jewelry,
- Use warm water and wet your hands thoroughly,
- Use soap (1-3 ml.) and lather very well,
- Scrub your hands thoroughly, including between your fingers, up to and including your wrists with soap for 10 to 20 seconds (about the time it takes to sing your A-B-Cs),
- Don't forget to scrub under your nails,
- Rinse thoroughly,
- Turn off the taps/faucets with a paper towel,
- Dry your hands with a single use towel or air dryer,
- Protect your hands from touching dirty surfaces as you leave the bathroom (use the paper towel to open the door and discard it afterwards).

## Other tips include:

- Cover cuts with bandages and wear gloves for added protection (cuts are very vulnerable to infections).
- Artificial nails and chipped nail polish have been associated with an increase in the number of bacteria on the finger nails. Be sure to clean the nails properly.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Assume that contact with any human body fluids is infectious.
- Liquid soap in disposable containers is best. If using reusable containers, they should be washed and dried before refilling. If using a bar of soap, be sure to set it on a rack that allows water to drain or use small bars that can be changed frequently.

## Posters

Hand washing posters are available free of charge for schools, businesses, registered nurses, and members of the public. To order, send an email to [info@crnm.mb.ca](mailto:info@crnm.mb.ca) or call (204) 774-3477.

**DON'T BE THE ONE. WASH YOUR HANDS.**

One of the best ways to stop the spread of disease and germs is also one of the easiest things to do. Washing your hands only takes 15 seconds, about the time it takes to sing your ABCs. Registered nurses are experts on health and a great source of information.

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