

“Hand washing, which traditionally was the first line of defense in preventing the spread of disease, has been neglected and must be embraced vigorously by families, schools, and health care professionals.”

– *Richard Wittenberg, President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Association of World Health*

“Handwashing can be the first line of defense against many infectious diseases and against respiratory and gastrointestinal disorders... Resolved: that the American Medical Association in its publications urge, not only professionals, but the public to adopt handwashing as an important personal priority.”

– *American Medical Association House of Delegates, Resolution 409*

"The easiest way to prevent bacterial illness: Wash your hands! (And wash them often.)"

– *National Consumers League*

"Handwashing is the simplest and most effective way to keep from getting rhinovirus colds."

– *National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, NIH*

"...whether it's colds or diarrhea... handwashing benefits both younger and older children in child-care."

– *Child Health Alert*

“Good handwashing technique is easy to learn and can significantly reduce the spread of infectious diseases among both children and adults.”

– *Wisconsin Division of Public Health*

“Handwashing is the no. 1 prevention against spread of infection, inside and outside the hospital setting. It is important in the home, in schools and in every workplace. It is the cornerstone of infection-control practice and education for everyone who works in health care. At our facility, handwashing is considered serious business and proper practice is enforced.”

– *Summit Medical Center, Oakland, California*

“Handwashing is cheap, but the impact from it is great.”

– *Dr. Richard Wenzel, Chairman of the Internal Medicine Department at the Medical College of Virginia*



For more information visit the official website of Take Action: Clean Hands Campaign at www.washup.org



TAKE ACTION
CLEAN HANDS CAMPAIGN

DISEASES

Common Cold
Hand washing is one of the “most important means of preventing the spread of infection,” according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

stomach flu
Don't Get Caught Dirty Handed...



Bacteria

...Hand washing is the simplest, most effective way to reduce the risk of spreading germs known to trigger common and sometimes serious illnesses. In fact, hand washing may be one of the public's best defenses against the spread of infectious diseases such as SARS, colds, and flu and the best way to defeat the pesky diarrhea-causing Norwalk virus sometimes affecting cruise ship passengers.

You don't need any special cleansers or cleaning equipment – just soap, water and what Mom called 'elbow grease' and even you can get rid of the germs.

That's why the U.S. Centers for Disease Control agree with Mom that hand washing is one of the most effective tools we have in the battle against the spread of infectious disease.

CLEAN HANDS CAMPAIGN

If you begin to keep track of when you wash your hands you may find it's not as often as you think. Unfortunately, not only do many of us fail to wash our hands when we should, but three national surveys over the past several years show that wherever we are, we wash our hands significantly less than we say we do.

Results of a new survey show that many people still aren't washing their hands in public places, exposing others to the risk of infection, despite recent outbreaks of infectious diseases.

Although illnesses as deadly as SARS and as troublesome as the common cold and gastric upsets can be spread hand-to-hand, the survey sponsored by the American Society of Microbiology (ASM) found that many people passing through major US airports don't wash their hands after using the public facilities.

More than 30 percent of people using restrooms in New York airports, 19 percent of those in Miami's airport, and 27 percent of air travelers in Chicago aren't stopping to wash their hands. The survey, conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide in August 2003, observed 7,541 people in public washrooms in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Dallas, Miami, and Toronto airports.

In contrast to airports in the United States, the vast majority of travelers using the airport rest rooms in Toronto, Canada – a city which experienced a major SARS outbreak – washed almost every time.

WHY SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

Germs are so small that you can't see them. Although most of them are "good," a few of them can cause illnesses like diarrhea, colds and other more serious, sometimes even life-threatening diseases.

If you wash your hands correctly, you will greatly reduce the chances of spreading the germs. Disease-causing germs enter your body when your unwashed hands touch your nose, mouth, eyes, and open wounds.

While health care providers have a professional responsibility to wash their hands, it is important that everyone make hand washing a personal priority.

WHEN SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

- Before you:** Prepare or eat food
Treat a cut or wound or tend to someone who is sick
Insert or remove contact lenses
- After you:** Go to the bathroom
Handle uncooked foods, particularly raw meat, poultry or fish
Change a diaper
Blow your nose, cough or sneeze
Handle garbage
Tend to someone who is sick or injured
Handle an animal or animal waste

HOW SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

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

- Use soap and warm, running water
- Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, backs of hands, fingers and under the fingernails
- Rub hands together for at least 10 to 15 seconds
- When drying, if possible, use a clean or disposable towel, pat your skin rather than rubbing to avoid chapping and cracking
- Apply hand lotion after washing to help prevent and soothe dry skin