

# Why Should I Wash my Hands?

Hand washing is believed to be the single most important factor in preventing the spread of germs. Hand washing removes the dirt and surface germs, thereby washing microorganisms off. It may also kill and inhibit the regrowth of organisms if a medicated soap is used.

Many infected people carry communicable diseases without showing symptoms and others may be contagious before symptoms appear, therefore good hygiene practices should be performed on a routine basis. Unwashed or poorly washed hands can contribute to food-related illness outbreaks. Hands can transfer germs from contaminated raw meat, eggs and poultry to the other foods, or from an infected person to the food.

Anyone that comes in contact with germs should wash their hands. The following list is a few examples of situations that hand washing is necessary:

- before eating
- before preparing or serving food
- when handling uncooked foods, particularly raw meat, poultry or fish
- after handling garbage
- after using the toilet/restroom facilities
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose
- after taking care of a sick person
- when treating a cut or wound

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 warm or hot, running water, and soap (preferably antibacterial). Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers and under fingernails (if possible with a nail brush). When a heavy lather has developed rub hands together for at least 15 seconds. When drying, begin with your forearms and work towards your hands and fingertips. Pat your skin rather than rubbing to avoid chapping and cracking.

## Facts about antibacterial soaps

### What is the main difference between plain soaps and antibacterial soaps?

The main difference is that antibacterial soaps contain a special ingredient for controlling germs. When washing with an antibacterial soap, a very small amount of antibacterial ingredient is deposited on the skin that keeps the number of germs at a significantly reduced level for an extended period of time. Washing with plain soap initially removes some germs, but the germs left on the hands can quickly regrow and increase in number.

### What germs do antibacterial soaps kill?

They kill or inhibit bacteria that cause odor, skin infections, **food poisoning**, intestinal illness and other commonly transmitted diseases. Their effectiveness depends on the antibacterial ingredient, its concentration, its contact time on the skin and the product formulation.

### Who should use antibacterial soaps?

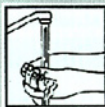
Antibacterial soaps provide extra protection against bacteria that may cause many common illnesses. People wanting extra protection before preparing and eating meals, after using the bathroom, diapering a child, after playing with a pet or when caring for the sick may want to use an antibacterial soap.

### Are deodorant soaps the same as antibacterial soaps?

No. A deodorant soap is a cosmetic product intended for washing the body to eliminate odors. A deodorant soap may or may not contain an ingredient that kills or inhibits the growth of odor-causing bacteria.

## SEVEN STEPS TO EFFECTIVE HAND WASHING

1.



Turn on water to a comfortable temperature and moisten hands and wrists.

Apply liquid soap and generate a heavy lather.



3.



Wash well under running water for approximately 15 seconds, between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, and back of hands.

4.

Rinse well under water for 30 seconds.



5.



Hold hands so water flows from hands to fingertips.

Dry hands completely with a paper towel.



7.



Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet so your hands remain clean from any contamination that may be on the faucet.



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