

Handwashing: A Family Activity

Keeping Kids & Adults Healthy



Handwashing is an easy, inexpensive, and effective way to prevent the spread of germs and keep people healthy.

For kids, washing hands can be a fun and entertaining activity. It is simple enough for even very young children to understand. Handwashing gives children and adults a chance to take an active role in their own health. Once kids learn how to properly wash their hands, they can—and often do—show their parents and siblings and encourage them to wash hands, too.

Parents can help keep their families healthy by:

- Teaching them good handwashing technique
- Reminding their kids to wash their hands
- Washing their own hands with their kids

Improving Health

- Handwashing education in the community:
 - » Reduces the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by 31%
 - » Reduces diarrheal illness in people with weakened immune systems by 58%
 - » Reduces respiratory illnesses, like colds, in the general population by 21%

Saving Time and Money

- Handwashing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness to others.
- Reducing illness increases productivity due to:
 - » Less time spent at the doctor's office
 - » More time spent at work or school

Helping Families Thrive

Children who have been taught handwashing at school bring that knowledge home to parents and siblings. This can help family members get sick less often and miss less work and school.

Despite widespread knowledge of the importance of handwashing, there is still room for improvement. A recent study showed that only 31% of men and 65% of women washed their hands after using a public restroom.

For more details, visit www.cdc.gov/handwashing.



Department of Health and Human Services
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