

Hand washing



According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), hand washing with plain soap and water is the most important thing you can do to reduce the spread of infectious disease in your ECE program and at home.

Create a policy in your ECE program that states when and how to wash hands.

This helps everyone understand the importance of hand washing.

How should you wash your hands:

- when you arrive in your ECE facility.
- after changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet, even if you wear gloves.
- before and after giving medication or treating or bandaging a wound.
- after using the bathroom. (Children often need help remembering this and they need help with doing it.)
- before and after you cook or handle food (especially raw meat and poultry).
- before you eat.
- after you clean.
- after you touch animals, including pets, or pet toys, food, brushes, or waste.
- before and after you take care of a sick child.
- after you handle body fluids, blow your nose, or sneeze or cough into your hands for you help a child do that or after helping a child with a runny nose.
- after you work or play outside.
- after touching garbage, bins or cans.
- whenever they look dirty.
- more often when there is an infectious disease spreading in your facility or community.

How should you wash your hands?

Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) and apply plain (not antibacterial) soap. Using antibacterial soap may lead to the development of disease resistant bacteria (superbugs), making it harder to kill these germs in the future. Foaming hand soap is easy to use and saves on soap and water use. Alcohol soap, if can be a source of germs.

- Always use soap without it, you can't get rid of the surface dirt.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well.
- Be sure to scrub:
 - the backs of your hands,
 - your wrists,
 - between your fingers and
 - under your nails where germs can hide (using a nail brush helps with this).
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. To help you remember how long to wash, sing or hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry hands from fingertips to wrist with a clean paper towel. Rubbing with a paper towel will remove more germs from your hands.
- Turn off faucet and open door (for adult bathroom) with paper towel. These "high touch" surfaces may be home for lots of germs. Researchers have found that faucet handles are among the most contaminated surfaces in child care centers.