

Hand Washing Awareness

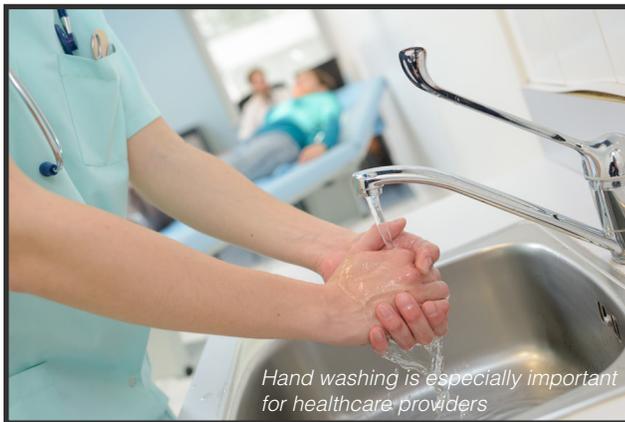
The Importance of Hand Washing

There's Global Hand Washing Day, and then there's National Hand Washing Awareness Week—an entire week dedicated to raising awareness about washing your hands. With the outbreak of COVID-19 washing your hands can literally save lives.

HAND WASHING TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

Hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. It prevents the spread of germs, even antibiotic-resistant germs, that are becoming difficult to treat.

Hand washing is especially important for healthcare providers



According to the Gillings School of Global Public Health, healthcare providers on average clean their hands less than half of the times they should. On any given day, one in 25 hospital patients also has at least one health care-associated infection.

The amount of microorganisms that accumulate each day on our hands is staggering. Our hands are constantly touching items, surfaces and people that contain these invisible bacteria and viruses. Germs in our hands can easily enter the body through the mucus membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth.

Some germs are harmless while others are not, causing infection like the common cold and more serious illnesses like typhoid fever, gastroenteritis and bacterial meningitis. It's impossible to keep our hands 100% germ-free all the time, but frequent hand washing can greatly reduce the chances of contamination and the spread of infection.

HAND WASHING WEEK AND HYGIENE FACTS

Hand washing saves lives. It can save your life and the lives of people who are the most vulnerable to infection, like the sick, the elderly, and those with weak immune systems due to genetics, illness or treatments like chemotherapy.

Did you know that 1 million deaths a year could be prevented if everyone washed their hands routinely? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published a list of other hygiene facts that focus on the importance of hand washing and general cleanliness:

- Hand washing with soap and water could reduce deaths associated with diarrheal disease by up to 50%.
- Proper hand washing can reduce the risk of food-borne illness and other infections that are spread by contaminated hands.
- Hand washing can reduce the risk of respiratory infections by 16%.
- The use of an alcohol gel hand sanitizer reduced overall absenteeism due to infection by 19.8% among 16 elementary schools and 6,000 students.
- Within the first 15 minutes of bathing, the average person sheds 6×10^6 colony forming units (CFU) of *Staphylococcus aureus*, a type of bacteria that can cause pneumonia and skin, bone and heart valve infections.
- Lack of facial hygiene is related to preventable blindness and high risk of acquiring eye infections.

CHILDREN AND HAND WASHING

We are all germ carriers, but children are notable because it's in their nature to touch things that adults find absolutely filthy and disgusting. Germs that cause scary illnesses are a real concern for parents and caregivers. Diarrhea and pneumonia, two illnesses transmitted on the hands, cause more than 20% of deaths of children under the age of five. Education and proper hygiene like hand washing can prevent many of these deaths. Hand washing also goes a long way to ensure kids stay healthy.



Hand Washing Awareness Week 2019

Teaching kids by example is good and actually showing them how and when to wash their hands properly is even better. Parents should establish the habit of hand washing before meals, after going to the bathroom, after play time and any time the hands look and feel grimy. Teach your kids not to share personal items like cups, utensils, straws, and food, and to use a tissue for coughing and sneezing.

Children should spend 20 seconds vigorously washing their hands. One article reported that singing "Happy Birthday" twice encourages kids to take their time while lathering up. You can turn hand washing into a fun activity with singing and games to make it less of a chore. For children who cannot reach a sink, a step stool is a great help.

LEARNING HOW TO WASH YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

Hand washing should be done thoroughly at these times:

- Any time your hands are grimy and dirty
- Before preparing or handling food, eating, taking medication, caring for a wound, or helping a person who is sick
- After handling food, dirty dishes or trash
- After cleaning the house and working in the garden
- After touching animals and feeding pets
- After changing a diaper or using the bathroom
- After touching bodily fluids
- After helping or caring for a sick person
- After sneezing, blowing your nose or coughing

Hand washing steps:

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water. Warm or cold is fine, but warm may be better to help soap lather up.
2. Apply soap on your hands. Liquid is best, but use whatever you have on hand. Try to avoid antibacterial soap as it may encourage the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.



3. Rub all surfaces gently for at least 20 seconds. Don't forget the dirt between fingers and under fingernails, especially if your fingernails are long. Germs can thrive in and around rings, watches and other jewelry. Make sure to scrub under them.
4. Rinse well until all soap, grime and grease are gone.
5. Dry your hands with an air dryer, paper towel, clean towel or disposable wipe.
6. Turn the water off (ideally with the faucet covered with the towel or tissue).

If you don't have soap and water, hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol does the trick.

HANDS FREE HAND WASHING

Germs get everywhere, including faucet handles. That's why it's important to use a towel or tissue to close the tap after washing your hands. An alternative is hands-free sinks and lavatories that use foot/knee pedals or sensor operated faucets. Hands-free sinks and lavatories ensure that your hands stay clean after washing.

HANDS-FREE HAND WASHING BENEFITS

Hands-free sinks and lavatories keep healthcare facilities, toilets and kitchens sanitary. They encourage frequent hand washing by making the process easy.

Hands-free sinks prevent cross contamination and the spread of disease-causing microorganisms as the user does not need to touch the faucet to get the water running and to turn it off.

People with limited hand, wrist and arm mobility will find it easier to keep their hands clean with a sensor operated lavatory. Putting your hands in the detection area of the faucet will get the water flowing. In places that can get really grimy like outdoor work areas and garages, hands-free sinks ensure that dirt, grease and germs go down the drain instead of staying on taps and faucet handles.

Hands-free sinks are also great in busy work areas like kitchens where workers often have their hands full.

AQUA DESIGN HANDS-FREE HAND WASHING PRODUCTS

Aqua Design makes it easy to wash your hands and stay healthy with hands-free products like washfountains, lavatory systems and sensor faucets. Some Aqua Design sinks and lavatories are manufactured with an anti-microbial agent that is present both on the surface and on the inside of the material. When in contact with moisture, antimicrobial ions will be released to effectively kill bacteria.

In addition to hands-free operation and antimicrobial properties, Aqua Design products are created with designers and architects in mind. We provide modern and modular lavatory systems for new builds and remodels.

To learn more about products that make hand washing so easy, visit our website or contact us today!