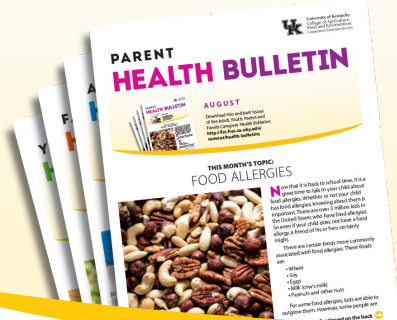




PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



OCTOBER 2021

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: KEEP THOSE HANDS CLEAN



When kids are exposed to germs, they easily become infected because of how often they touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. As us parents know, once one child is infected, it is usually just a matter of time before the entire family comes down with the same illness. While there is no way you can be a germ-free family, hand-washing with soap and warm water is the front line of defense.

Global Hand-washing Day is Oct. 15 and a great way to encourage your family members to wash their hands with soap, especially during critical times. Studies have shown that a majority of kids do not wash their hands correctly or for long enough. Therefore, to celebrate Global Hand-washing Day, go over the proper hand-washing technique with your family.

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One of the best ways to help your child see that hand-washing is important is for you to do it yourself.

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How to wash:

1. Wet your hands with warm or cold water and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands, including the backs, between your fingers and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds. You can sing “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” or the “Happy Birthday” song twice to make sure that you or your children are washing for long enough.
4. Rinse your hands well under running water.
5. Dry your hands with a clean towel or air dryer.

One of the best ways to help your child see that hand-washing is important is for you to do it yourself. Talk to your child about when they should wash their hands.

Parents should wash hands before:

- preparing or eating food;
- feeding your baby or child (including breastfeeding); and
- giving medication to your child.

Children should wash their hands before:

- eating or handling food; and
- playing in water.

Parents should wash hands after:

- preparing food;
- changing a diaper;
- helping a child to use a toilet;
- using a toilet yourself;
- wiping or blowing your nose or your child’s nose;
- taking care of a sick child;
- treating a cut;
- handling pets or animals or cleaning cages or litter boxes;
- cleaning around the house; and
- handling garbage.



Children should wash their hands after:

- using the toilet;
- playing outdoors, in sand, or in water;
- handling pets or animals;
- sneezing or coughing into their hands or blowing their nose;
- eating;
- attending school or day care; and
- spending time in high volume public places (e.g., indoor play structures, shopping malls, grocery stores, buses, etc.).

Washing our hands and kiddos’ hands throughout the day with soap and water is one of the most important things you can do to get rid of germs. However, if you do not have water or soap, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Make sure that it is at least 60% alcohol, and only let children use it under adult supervision.

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- Hand-washing for parents and kids. Paediatr Child Health. 2001;6(1):53-56. doi:10.1093/pch/6.1.53
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- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-family.html>

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HEALTH BULLETIN

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