

## It's a Wash!

Washing hands is one of the most important activities you can do to keep yourself and others from becoming sick. Foodborne illness is caused by eating food that is contaminated with germs. Germs are tiny, living organisms that can usually only be seen through a microscope. Once in your body they use valuable nutrients and energy to make you sick. Symptoms such as fever, vomiting, and diarrhea let you know that something is wrong. Not all germs are bad, but soap and water will put germs on the run. Properly washing your hands can go a long way in keeping everyone in your house healthy!

### When to Wash Your Hands

Germs are everywhere. They're on your hands, under your fingernails, in your nose, and throat, and even on your hair. Germs can easily be transferred to food from dirty hands, clothing, utensils, and kitchen surfaces. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tell us that if we would wash our hands every time we needed to, we could prevent over half of all illnesses. You should wash your hands often.

★Wash when your hands look or feel dirty ★Wash after using the bathroom ★Wash before eating or handling food ★Wash after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose ★Wash before bandaging cuts or scrapes ★Wash after changing the baby's diaper ★Wash after touching things used by a sick person ★Wash after handling animals. Can you think of others?

### How to Wash Your Hands

1. Make sure a clean paper towel is ready.
2. Turn on warm water.
3. Wet your hands and apply soap.
4. Rub your hands together under running water for at least 20 seconds, preferably 30 seconds.
5. Pay special attention to washing under your fingernails, between your fingers, and the edge of your palm.
6. Rinse your hands well.
7. Dry your hands with a single-use towel.
8. Turn off the water with the towel.
9. If you have to open a door to leave the sink area, use the paper towel to open it.
10. Throw the paper towel in a trash container without touching the trash can.

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