

Adult Health Bulletin



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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:

KEEP GERMS AWAY: WASH YOUR HANDS

Did you know that the simple act of washing your hands can be a major help in preventing illness? All it takes is a few minutes of washing your hands during the day to help you stay healthy all year long.

When should you wash your hands?

As the day passes, all the different things you touch can have germs on them. Those germs are transferred easily to your hands. You cannot ever keep your hands completely germ free, but there are times when hand washing can limit the amount of germs you are exposed to.

You should always wash your hands when:

- Preparing food
- Eating
- Taking medicine
- Giving medicine or caring for another sick person



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Always wash your hands before preparing food, eating, taking medicine, or caring for another sick person.

Continued from page 1

How do you effectively wash your hands?

When you wash your hands, you will need soap and water. Follow these steps:

- Wet your hands.
- Apply the soap.
- Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Remember to include the backs of your hands, in-between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Rinse your hands well.
- Dry your hands.
- If possible, use a towel to turn off the water.

Washing your hands is one of the best ways you can prevent getting sick.

What about hand sanitizer?

When soap and water are not available, hand sanitizer is another option. If you use hand sanitizer, make sure it is at least 60 percent alcohol. Make sure you use enough to wet your hands thoroughly. You should rub your hands together until they are dry. Again, do not forget about the backs of your hands and in-between fingers.

Children should wash their hands too!

Hand washing can help children stay healthy too. If you have a child or grandchild, take the time to show them how to wash their hands properly. You can teach them to sing a song while they are washing to make sure they spend enough time washing. Singing "Happy Birthday" two times is about how long it should take them to wash.

Hand sanitizers can also be an option for children. Just make sure to put it away after use.

Washing your hands is one of the best ways you can prevent getting sick. Start the New Year off right by staying healthy.

SOURCE:

Mayo Clinic. Hand-washing: Do's and Don'ts. Oct 2011. www.mayoclinic.com



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