

## Handwashing Procedure

Most experts agree that the single most effective practice that prevents the spread of germs is good handwashing. Below are instructions regarding when hands should be washed as well as proper handwashing procedure. Teachers can stop the spread of germs by washing their hands and teaching children good handwashing practices.

When Hands Should Be Washed:

Children:

- Upon arrival to the classroom
- Immediately before and after eating
- After using the toilet or changing soiled clothing
- Before and after using water tables
- After playing on the playground
- After handling pets, pet cages, or other pet objects
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Staff:

- Upon arrival to the classroom
- Immediately before handling food, or feeding children
- After using the toilet, assisting a child in using the toilet, or changing soiled clothing
- After handling pets, pet cages, or other pet objects
- After contacting a child's body fluids, including soiled clothing, runny noses, spit, vomit, etc.
- After removing gloves used for any purpose\*
- Before giving or applying medication or ointment to a child or self

\*If gloves are being used, hands should be washed immediately after gloves are removed even if hands are not visibly contaminated. Use of gloves alone will not prevent contamination of hands or spread of germs and should not be considered a substitute for handwashing.

**Rubbing hands together under running water is the most important part of washing away infectious germs.** Premoistened towelettes or wipes and waterless hand cleaners should not be used as a substitute for washing hands with soap and running water.

## How to Wash Hands

- Always use warm running water and a mild, preferably liquid soap. Antibacterial soaps may be used, but are not required. Premoistened cleansing towelettes and waterless hand cleaners do not effectively clean hands and do not take the place of handwashing.
- Wet hands and apply a small amount (dime to quarter size) of liquid soap to hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 15 seconds. Be sure to scrub between fingers, under fingernails, and around the tops and palms of the hands
- Rinse hands under warm running water. Leave the water running while drying hands.
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable (or single use) towel, being careful to avoid touching the faucet handles or towel holder with clean hands.
- Turn the faucet off using the towel as a barrier between your hands and the faucet handle.
- Discard the used towel in a trash can lined with a fluid-resistant (plastic) bag. Trash cans with foot-pedal operated lids are preferable.
- When assisting a child in handwashing, either hold the child or have the child stand on a safety step at a height at which the child's hands can hang freely under the running water. Assist the child in performing all of the above steps and then wash your own hands.

Reference: <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/>