



**HAND-WASHING**



## THE IMPORTANCE OF HANDWASHING

Hand-washing is not only a simple but also a highly effective method for preventing the spread of infections and illnesses, making it an essential habit from the earliest stages of life. Even infants can benefit from the practice, with caregivers ensuring their hands are clean before handling the baby or preparing their food. This early emphasis on hand hygiene sets the foundation for lifelong habits of cleanliness and health. As children grow, it's crucial to teach them the importance of proper hand-washing techniques, including thorough scrubbing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Numerous studies support the effectiveness of hand-washing in reducing the transmission of infectious diseases. For instance, research published in **the Journal of Pediatrics** highlighted that **regular hand-washing with soap and water decreased the risk of respiratory infections in children by up to 45%**. These findings highlight the significant impact that hand hygiene can have on preventing illness and promoting overall well-being.

Incorporating hand-washing into daily routines, such as before eating, after using the restroom, and after playing outdoors, helps children develop habits that protect both themselves and others from germs.



## STEPS FOR PROPER HAND-WASHING:

- **Wet your hands with clean, running water:** Turn on the faucet and wet your hands thoroughly. The water can be warm or cold; either is effective for hand-washing.
- **Apply soap:** Dispense an adequate amount of soap into your hands. Use enough to cover all surfaces of your hands, including between your fingers and under your nails.
- **Lather:** Rub your hands together to create a lather. Be sure to scrub all parts of your hands, including the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Continue rubbing for at least 20 seconds.
- **Scrub for at least 20 seconds:** Singing a short song, such as "Happy Birthday" or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" twice, can help ensure you wash for the recommended duration.
- **Rinse thoroughly:** Hold your hands under clean, running water to rinse off all the soap.
- **Dry your hands:** Use a clean towel or air dry your hands. If using a towel, pat your hands dry rather than rubbing them, as rubbing can spread germs.
- **Turn off the faucet:** Use a paper towel or your elbow to turn off the faucet to avoid recontaminating your hands.

# INFOGRAPHIC OF HANDWASHING

An infographic on hand-washing is a valuable tool, offering clear, step-by-step guidance on proper hand hygiene. Its visual format provides quick reference and engages children, modeling proper hand-washing practices. Displayed in common areas, it serves as a reminder of the importance of hand hygiene, contributing to a healthier environment for children. Consider taking pictures of your own children washing their hands, then display their images as an even stronger and more personalized form of visual representation.



WATER AND SOAP

## WASH YOUR HANDS



FOCUS ON WRISTS



PALM TO PALM



BACK OF HANDS



BETWEEN FINGERS



FOCUS ON THUMBS



FOCUS ON NAILS

# TIPS WHEN MET WITH OPPOSITION

- **Lead by Example:** When you wash your hands together with children and show them the proper technique, you can demonstrate the importance of hand-washing and make it a shared activity. Children often learn best through observation, so modeling good hand-washing habits can be highly effective.
- **Incorporate Hand-washing into Routine Activities:** When you link hand-washing to daily activities like mealtime or bathroom breaks, you can establish it as a natural part of the routine. For example, you can make hand-washing the first step before snack/meal time and after using the restroom.
- **Highlight Positive Outcomes:** Instead of focusing on restrictions, emphasize the positive outcomes that follow hand-washing to motivate children. For example, instead of saying, "If you don't wash your hands, you can't eat lunch," you can reframe it positively by saying, "When you wash your hands, you can eat lunch." By highlighting the rewarding experience that follows hand-washing, children are encouraged to see it as a beneficial activity rather than a chore. This approach shifts the focus from negative consequences to positive opportunities, motivating children to engage in hand-washing willingly. It also reinforces the importance of hand hygiene in a positive and empowering manner, fostering a sense of responsibility and cooperation among children.
- **Use Positive Reinforcement:** When you praise children for washing their hands thoroughly, you can reinforce the behavior and make them more likely to repeat it in the future. Offer specific compliments, such as "You're scrubbing all the way to your fingertips!" to highlight their efforts.
- **Offer Choices (When possible):** When you let children choose their own soap or hand towel, you can empower them to take ownership of the hand-washing process. Providing options such as different colors or scents can make hand-washing feel more personalized and enjoyable for children.
- **Make it a Game:** When you turn hand-washing into a fun game, you can make it more appealing for children. For example, you can sing a hand-washing song together or challenge them to see who can make the most bubbles with the soap.

# SONGS TO SUPPORT HANDWASHING

Singing songs engages children during handwashing, making the activity enjoyable and helping them maintain the recommended duration for effective hygiene.

## Hand-washing Song (Tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

### Verse 1:

Wash your hands and make them clean,  
Front and back and in between.  
Scrub with soap, and rinse away,  
Germs and dirt won't stay today.

### Chorus:

Wash your hands, it's really fun,  
Keep on scrubbing 'til you're done.

### Verse 2:

Rub your palms and fingers too,  
Thumbs and nails, each part to do.  
Rinse with water, then you'll see,  
Clean hands are the way to be.

### Chorus:

Wash your hands, it's really fun,  
Keep on scrubbing 'til you're done.

**This song should be sung twice to ensure kids wash their hands for the recommended 20 seconds.**

## Hand-washing Song (Tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat")

### Verse 1:

Wash, wash, wash your hands,  
Make them nice and clean.  
Scrub the tops and scrub the palms,  
And fingers in between.

### Chorus:

Wash, wash, wash your hands,  
Do it every day.  
Thumbs and nails, don't forget,  
Wash the germs away.

### Verse 2:

Rinse, rinse, rinse your hands,  
Now they're sparkling bright.  
Dry them well with a towel,  
You're doing it just right.

### Chorus:

Wash, wash, wash your hands,  
Do it every day.  
Thumbs and nails, don't forget,  
Wash the germs away.

**This song should be sung twice to ensure kids wash their hands for the recommended 20 seconds.**



**MADE FOR CHILDREN. DESIGNED FOR YOU.**

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