

Food Safety Grab and Go Lesson

Keep Food Safe: Wash Hands the Best Way

Handwashing is the most important way to prevent the spread of germs and illness in child care. Caregivers and children need to wash their hands often. How, where, and when hands are washed can help keep germs away.

How to Wash Hands

- Use soap and warm, running water. Liquid soap is best. Bar soap can be a source of germs. Check with your health or licensing agency about the kind of soap they require.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub well for 20 seconds. Scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails. Sing or hum the *Birthday Song* or *ABC Song* from beginning to end two times and you will have washed for 20 seconds. This is a good way to help children learn how long to wash their hands.
- You may want to use a nailbrush.
- Rinse hands thoroughly, under running water.
- Dry hands with a paper towel and use it to turn off faucets; throw away the paper towel. Cloth towels, when used more than once, can spread germs.



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Where to Wash Hands

- Wash hands at the bathroom sink or a sink designated only for hand washing. Do not use the kitchen sink for hand washing. It should be clean for food preparation.
- Keep liquid soap and paper towels near the handwashing sink.
- Have a step stool for children if the sink is not positioned at child height.
- Clean and sanitize the handwashing sink.
- Post a copy of the *Wash Your Hands* childcare mini-poster near the sink.

When to Wash Hands

- Anytime you are not sure hands are clean
- Anytime hands come into contact with body fluids
- After you handle raw food, especially meat, chicken, or fish
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before you prepare, handle, or feed bottles of infant formula or breast milk to an infant
- Before setting the table or sitting down to eat
- After you eat, drink, or smoke
- After diapering a child or cleaning up a child who has used the bathroom
- After you change a bandage or give any kind of first aid to a child or adult
- After you use the toilet
- After you sneeze, use a tissue, or help a child to do so
- After you cough or cover your mouth with your hand
- After touching garbage
- After you play with, feed, or care for pets or other animals
- Upon arrival and departure from the classroom

