

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Keep Food Safe: Wash Hands the Best Way

Topic Area: Health and Safety
Subtopic Area: Food Safety

Objective: Recall how, when, and where to wash hands to promote good health and development in child care settings.

Handwashing is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses in child care settings. Hands can carry trillions of germs that can cause preventable illnesses, such as diarrhea and pneumonia. Introducing children to handwashing and other good hygiene practices at an early age helps to reduce these and other preventable illnesses. Also, children who are exposed to good handwashing practices are often more advanced in multiple areas of development, such as cognitive, communication, and motor. Therefore, teaching young children how and when to wash hands is a great way to promote good health and development.

What are the handwashing supplies?

Any great handwashing space will feature the following items:

- Handwashing sink with a step stool
- Clean, running water (warm or cold)
- Liquid soap
- Paper towels or single-use hand cloths
- Wastebasket

How to Wash Hands

- Wet your hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make a lather on the entire hand.
- Scrub the front and back of hands and between fingers for at least 20 seconds. Hum the birthday song twice, and you will have washed for 20 seconds.
- Rinse hands well with clean, running water.
- Dry hands with a clean, single-use paper towel.
- Use the towel to turn off faucets and open any doors.



Where to Wash Hands?

- Wash hands at the bathroom sink or in a sink designated only for handwashing. Do not use the kitchen sink for handwashing. It should be kept 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 daily.

When to Wash Hands?

- Anytime you are not sure hands are clean
- Anytime hands touch bodily fluids

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- After you handle raw food, especially meat, poultry, or fish
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before you prepare, handle, or feed bottles of infant formula or breastmilk 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 restroom
- After you, or a child, sneezes or uses a tissue
- After you have physical contact with any sick child or adult
- 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

Washing hands carefully and thoroughly can help everyone in the child care setting prevent the spread of germ-causing illnesses. Also, teaching children at an early age how to wash their hands can have a long-lasting impact on their health and development. For additional resources on handwashing, refer to the handwashing posters at <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *Improving child development: A new CDC handwashing study shows promising results*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/child-development.html>

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