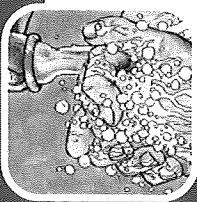




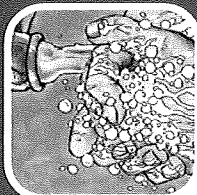
**Wash  
your  
hands**



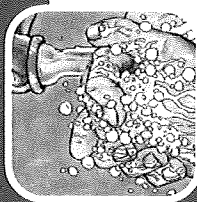
**Wash  
your  
hands**



**Wash  
your  
hands**



**Wash  
your  
hands**



**Wash  
your  
hands**

**Handwashing is the  
20-second solution  
to protecting yourself  
from many diseases.**

**So remember:**

**Use soap**

**Wash often**

**Wash long enough**



*clean*  
**Your health is in your hands**



For more information about  
handwashing, please call the  
Massachusetts Department of  
Public Health, Division of  
Epidemiology and Immunization  
at 617.983.6800 or visit the MDPH website at  
[www.mass.gov/handwashing](http://www.mass.gov/handwashing)

April 2004

♻️ Printed on recycled paper

**What's the  
simplest way  
to protect  
yourself from**

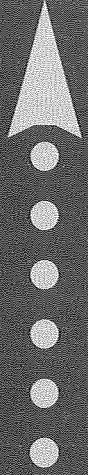
**colds?**

**flu?**

**diarrhea?**

**hepatitis A?**

**SARS?**



# Why

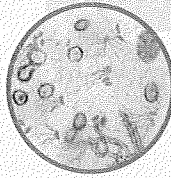
Many outbreaks of foodborne illness are traced to unwashed or poorly washed hands.

Sneezing and coughing can spread cold germs into the air, but most colds are caught and spread through germs on people's hands.

The germs that cause the flu, SARS, hepatitis A and many kinds of diarrhea can also be picked up and spread by your hands.

If these germs are on your hands, touching your mouth or nose to eat, sneeze or cough can make you sick.

Touching a doorknob, pressing an elevator button, grabbing a pole on public transit or shaking hands can spread germs to others.



Imagine looking at your unwashed hands under a microscope. What would you see growing there?

# When

**Always wash your hands**

## Before you

- touch or serve food eat or drink
- put in or take out contact lenses
- treat a cut, scrape, burn or blister
- take care of someone who is sick

## After you

- go to the bathroom
- help someone else use the bathroom
- change a diaper (don't forget to wash the baby's hands too!)
- cough, sneeze, blow your nose or wipe a child's nose
- handle uncooked food, especially raw meat, poultry, fish or eggs
- handle garbage
- touch an animal—especially a reptile—or clean up animal waste
- take care of someone who is sick or injured
- use public transportation

# How

Washing our hands is a lesson we all learned as children, but when we're busy or in a hurry, we tend to rush or forget to do it. We think our hands are clean, but they're not if we haven't done it right.

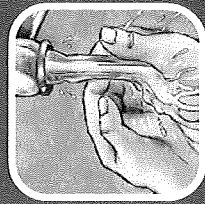
Just rinsing your hands isn't washing them, it's wetting them. To get them clean you need to use soap.

A quick rub, even with soap, won't get your hands clean, and the few seconds you save could cost you days if you get sick later.

To make sure your hands are really clean, scrub your palms, between your fingers, the backs of your hands and under your fingernails for at least 20 seconds.

After rinsing, dry your hands with a paper towel. Use the same paper towel to turn off the water and open the restroom door.

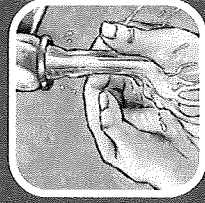
**Use regular soap.**  
**Antibacterial soap isn't necessary.**  
These soaps do kill bacteria, but antibacterial soaps may contribute to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance.



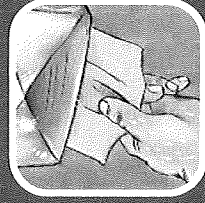
Wet hands



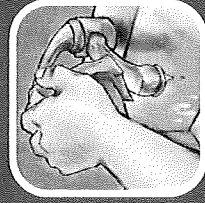
Apply soap & rub for 20 seconds



Rinse



Dry with paper towel



Use towel to turn off faucet

Your health *clean* is in your hands

## Hand Hygiene Guidelines Fact Sheet from C.D.C.

- Improved adherence to hand hygiene (i.e. hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand rubs) has been shown to terminate outbreaks in health care facilities, to reduce transmission of antimicrobial resistant organisms (e.g. methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus) and reduce overall infection rates.
- CDC is releasing guidelines to improve adherence to hand hygiene in health care settings. In addition to traditional handwashing with soap and water, CDC is recommending the use of alcohol-based handrubs by health care personnel for patient care because they address some of the obstacles that health care professionals face when taking care of patients.
- Handwashing with soap and water remains a sensible strategy for hand hygiene in non-health care settings and is recommended by CDC and other experts.
- When health care personnel's hands are visibly soiled, they should wash with soap and water.
- The use of gloves does not eliminate the need for hand hygiene. Likewise, the use of hand hygiene does not eliminate the need for gloves. Gloves reduce hand contamination by 70 percent to 80 percent, prevent cross-contamination and protect patients and health care personnel from infection. Handrubs should be used before and after each patient just as gloves should be changed before and after each patient.
- When using an alcohol-based handrub, apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry. Note that the volume needed to reduce the number of bacteria on hands varies by product.
- Alcohol-based handrubs significantly reduce the number of microorganisms on skin, are fast acting and cause less skin irritation.
- Health care personnel should avoid wearing artificial nails and keep natural nails less than one quarter of an inch long if they care for patients at high risk of acquiring infections (e.g. Patients in intensive care units or in transplant units)
- When evaluating hand hygiene products for potential use in health care facilities, administrators or product selection committees should consider the relative efficacy of antiseptic agents against various pathogens and the acceptability of hand hygiene products by personnel. Characteristics of a product that can affect acceptance and therefore usage include its smell, consistency, color and the effect of dryness on hands.
- As part of these recommendations, CDC is asking health care facilities to develop and implement a system for measuring improvements in adherence to these hand hygiene recommendations. Some of the suggested performance indicators include: periodic monitoring of hand hygiene adherence and providing feedback to personnel regarding their performance, monitoring the volume of alcohol-based handrub used/1000 patient days, monitoring adherence to policies dealing with wearing artificial nails and focused assessment of the adequacy of health care personnel hand hygiene when outbreaks of infection occur.
- Allergic contact dermatitis due to alcohol hand rubs is very uncommon. However, with increasing use of such products by health care personnel, it is likely that true allergic reactions to such products will occasionally be encountered.
- Alcohol-based hand rubs take less time to use than traditional hand washing. In an eight-hour shift, an estimated one hour of an ICU nurse's time will be saved by using an alcohol-based handrub.

Please feel free to print this article "as is" or edit it for publication.

## Sample Press Release/Article

### How to Stay Healthy This Flu Season

Deleted: ¶

Deleted:

Vaccination is not the only way to help prevent the flu. Here are steps you and your family can take to stay healthy this winter.

Perhaps the simplest and most effective way is to wash your hands often-- with soap and warm water. Rub your hands vigorously together and scrub all surfaces. Wash for at least 20 seconds. (Tip: have your children sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice while washing.) It is the soap combined with the scrubbing action that helps dislodge and remove germs. Use regular soap. Antibacterial soap is not necessary. These soaps may contribute to the growing problem of antibiotic resistance.

When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If using a gel, rub the gel in your hands until they are dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in the gel kills germs that cause colds and the flu. However, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers do not remove dirt.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when people touch something that is contaminated with germs and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth. Germs can live for a long time (some can live for 2 hours or more) on surfaces like doorknobs, desks and tables.

Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs cause illnesses like the flu (influenza). The flu usually spreads from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes and the droplets from the cough or sneeze move through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. So, always cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you do not have a tissue. Then, wash your hands, and do so every time you cough or sneeze.

If you feel ill, stay home from work and keep sick kids home from school or daycare. And keep in mind; most people with flu will recover just fine.

For more information, please call the \_\_\_\_\_ Board of Health at \_\_\_\_\_ or the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at 617-983-6800, or visit [www.mass.gov/handwashing](http://www.mass.gov/handwashing).