








Hands should be washed:









-  Before caring for patients
-  After direct contact with patients
-  Before and after preparing, handling, serving or eating food and before feeding a patient
-  When hands are visibly soiled
-  After removing gloves
-  After personal body functions (toilet, sneezing, wiping nose...)
-  Before giving medicine or applying ointment

Hand washing should be encouraged when a health care provider is in doubt about the need for doing so.

Refrain from...

- ...Using a standing basin of water to rinse hands
- ...Using a common towel. Always use disposable towels
- ...Waiting for your hands to get dirty
- ...Using excess soap
- ...Using water that is too hot or too cold
- ...Using a stronger cleanser than is required

Hand Washing Technique

-  Remove jewellery before washing your hands.
-  Thoroughly rinse your hands under warm running water.
-  Lather with soap. Using friction, cover all surfaces of your hands and fingers.
-  Continue for 10-15 seconds. (Make sure you get between your fingers and under fingernails.)
-  Rinse your hands with warm running water.
-  Dry your hands thoroughly with a paper towel.
-  Turn off the faucet with a paper towel if possible, to avoid re-contamination of your hands.
-  Use hand lotion from a single-use dispenser to put moisture back into your skin. This is especially helpful for frequent handwashers like health care providers.



Other Points to Remember about Hand Washing:

1. Keep hands away from your mouth, eyes and nose.
2. Be sure to clean your nails properly. Many germs are found under fingernails, artificial fingernails, nail polish and rings.
3. Glove use should be in addition to, not a substitution for, hand washing.
4. Gloves are single-use and disposable and should be changed if a leak or tear is suspected.
5. Gloves provide a barrier, but the protective effect is reduced the longer you wear them.
6. Gloves should be changed between patients.



Proper and frequent hand washing is the key to preventing the spread of many common infections. It is the best way to protect your health and the health of others when diseases such as cold and flu are 'going around'.



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Hand Washing for Health Care Providers



Hand washing keeps us healthy.

Hand washing, when done correctly is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

