

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



DECEMBER 2019

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HANDWASHING: THE KEY TO A HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON



The holidays are a great opportunity to enjoy time with family and friends. But holiday get-togethers are breeding grounds for germs like the flu and the common cold. Keep your family healthy this holiday season by washing hands routinely.

Explain to your children that handwashing helps keep them from getting sick or making other people sick. Handwashing can help prevent the spread of germs from happening as often.

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When to wash

Your child should wash hands before

- Eating,
- Cooking,
- Touching his or her mouth, eyes, or nose, or
- Touching a cut or scrape.

And after

- Going to the bathroom,
- Playing with pets or other animals,
- Touching pet food or treats,
- Being on playground equipment,
- Being close to a person who is sick,
- Touching a dirty diaper, or
- Touching garbage.

Proper handwashing

- 1. Wet your hands with clean, running water** (warm or cold). Make sure the water is not too hot for little hands.
- 2. Use soap, and lather up for about 20 seconds.** Antibacterial soap is not necessary — any soap will do.
- 3. Make sure you get in between your fingers,** on the backs of hands, and under the nails where germs like to hang out. Do not forget the wrists!
- 4. Rinse and dry well** with a clean towel.

Wash your hands with your kids before eating or cooking a meal, after using the bathroom, and after working or playing with your hands.



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- **Be patient.** It takes time for a child to get into the habit of handwashing and do it properly. Make sure to give help when needed.
- **Remind as often as needed.** Children will wash their hands if dirt is obvious, like mud or finger paint. They will need to be reminded to wash away germs that cannot be seen.

Good handwashing is the first line of defense against the spread of many illnesses — from the common cold to more serious infections, such as meningitis, bronchiolitis, and the flu.

RESOURCES:

- <https://globalhandwashing.org/hw-key-to-a-healthy-holiday>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday>
- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hand-washing.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- <https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=teaching-kids-to-wash-their-hands-1-972>

Tips for handwashing success

- **Lead by example.** Make sure to practice what you preach and model healthy handwashing.

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