



WORLD HAND HYGIENE DAY – 5 MAY 2024

Why is sharing knowledge about hand hygiene still so important? Because it helps stop the spread of harmful germs.

"Germs" refers to the microscopic bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites that can cause disease. They can be found everywhere – on surfaces, in the air, in the soil.

Facts about hand germs that you should know

- **Life of a germ** – germs on your hands and under your nails can survive up to three hours and some of them even longer.
- **Two million bacteria per fingertip** - our fingertips will have more than two million bacteria and other microorganisms.
- **Fast reproducers** - a germ can reproduce so fast that it can double its population in a few minutes.
- **Diseases spread through hands** - around 80% of disease-causing germs are transmitted through our hands.
- **Superfast transmitters** - our hands spread 1,000 times more germs when they are damp.

Why do we need to be clean?

It is important to reduce the spread of disease-causing microbes and, in turn, reduce diseases. Health and hygiene go hand-in-hand.



Which is better, hand sanitiser or handwashing?

Both are equally important. Washing hands with soap can help remove dirt and microbes. Waterless sanitisers cannot remove dirt and other pollutants but do kill the germs that are on a surface at the time of application.

How to wash your hands



1

WET your hands with clean running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap and apply soap.



4

RINSE well under clean running water.



2

LATHER with the soap. Be sure to include the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.



5

DRY your hands using a clean towel, or air-dry them.



3

SCRUB for about 20 seconds. Rub the palms together and then rub the back of your hands. Interlink your fingers and rub them together. Clean the Thumbs and then rub your palms with your fingers.



6

CLOSE the tap with paper towel. Soap and water are the most effective method of cleaning your hands, however, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with at least 70% alcohol if soap and clean water are not available. Remember, hand sanitisers are not effective when hands are very dirty or greasy.

Key Times to Wash Hands

Washing your hands is an effective health measure, but it only works as often as you do it.

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage



SOURCE:

[nationaltoday.com/world-hand-hygiene-day/](https://www.nationaltoday.com/world-hand-hygiene-day/)

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing>



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