

Washing Your Hands

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 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.

Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time:

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Do you need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. **However,**

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

How to use hand sanitizer:

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Home Safety Information

Here are some helpful guidelines to help you keep a careful eye on your home and maintain safe habits. The safe way is always the right way to do things. Shortcuts may hurt. Correct unsafe conditions before they cause an accident. Take responsibility. Keep your home safe. Keep emergency phone numbers handy.

Medication

- If children are in the home, store medications and poisons in childproof containers and out of reach.
- All medication should be labeled clearly and left in original containers.
- Do not give or take medication that were prescribed to other people.
- When taking or giving medication, read the label and measure doses carefully.
- Know the side effects of the medication you are taking.
- Do not throw away outdated medication by pouring down a sink or flushing down the toilet.

Slips and/or Falls

Slip and falls are the most common and often the most serious accidents in the home. Here are some things you can do to prevent them in your home.

- Arrange furniture to avoid an obstacle course.
- Install handrails on all stairs, showers, bathtubs, and toilets.
- Keep stairs clear and well lit.

- Place rubber mats or grids in showers and bathtubs.
- Use bath benches or shower chairs if you have muscle weakness, shortness of breath or dizziness.
- Wipe up all spilled water, oil or grease immediately.
- Pick up and keep surprises out from under your feet, including electrical cords and rugs.
- Keep drawers and cabinets closed.
- Install good lighting.

Mobility Items

When using mobility items to get around such as canes, walkers, wheelchairs, or crutches you should use extra care to prevent slips and falls.

- Use extreme care to avoid using walkers, canes or crutches on slippery or wet surfaces.
- Always put the wheelchairs or seated walkers in the lock position when standing up or before sitting down.
- Wear shoes when using these items and try to avoid obstacles in your path and soft and uneven surfaces.

Lifting

If it is too big, too heavy or too awkward to move alone - GET HELP. Here are some things you can do to prevent low back pain or injury:

- Stand close to the load with your feet apart for good balance.
- Bend your knees and "straddle" the load.
- Keep your back as straight as possible while you lift and carry the load.
- Avoid twisting your body when carrying a load.
- Plan ahead - clear your way.

Electrical Accidents

Watch for early warning signs; overheating, a burning smell or sparks. Unplug the appliance and get it checked right away. Here are some things you can do to prevent electrical accidents:

- Keep cords and electrical appliances away from any water or leaks.
- Do not plug cords under rugs, through doorways or near heaters. Check cords for damage before use.
- Extension cords must have a large enough wire for larger appliances.
- If you have a broken plug outlet or wire, get it fixed immediately.
- Use a grounded 3-wire plug to prevent shock in case of electrical fault.
- Do not overload outlets with too many plugs.
- Use three-prong adapters when necessary.

Smell Gas?

- Open windows and doors immediately.
- Shut off appliance(s) involved. You may be able to refer to the front of your telephone book for instructions regarding turning off the gas to your home.
- Do not use matches or turn on electrical switches.
- Do not use the telephone - dialing may create electrical sparks.
- Do not light candles.
- Call your Gas Company from a neighbor's home.
- If your gas company offers free annual inspections, take advantage of them.

Fire

Pre-plan and practice your fire escape. Look for a plan with at least two ways out of your home. If your fire exit is through a window, make sure it opens easily. If you are in an apartment, know where the exit stairs are located. Do not use the elevator in a fire emergency. You may notify the fire department ahead of time if you have a disability or special needs. Here are some steps to prevent fires:

- Install smoke detectors. They are your best early warning. Test frequently and change the battery every year (or as needed).
- If there is oxygen in use, place a "No Smoking" sign in plain view of all people entering the home.
- Throw away old newspapers, magazines and boxes.
- Empty waste baskets and trashcans regularly.
- Do not allow ashtrays or toss matches into wastebaskets unless you know they are out. Wet down first or dump into toilet.
- Have your chimney and fireplace checked frequently. Look for and repair cracks and loose mortar. Keep paper, wood and rugs away from areas where sparks could hit them.
- Be careful when using space heaters.
- Follow instructions when using a heating pad to avoid serious burns.
- Check your furnace and pipes regularly. If nearby walls or ceilings feel hot, add insulation.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your home and know how to use it.

If you have a fire or suspect fire:

1. Take immediate action per plan - escape is your top priority.
2. Get help on the way - with no delay. CALL 9-1-1.
3. If your fire escape is cut off, close the door and seal the cracks to hold back smoke. Signal help from the window.