Handwashing
Back to the Basics

Why is handwashing important?

Washing your hands is one of the best ways to stay healthy and stop the spread of germs, removing 99.9% of bacteria.

When should you wash your hands?

You should wash your hands often, but **especially** during these times:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick

- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching a pet or handling animal waste
- After touching garbage

- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After changing diapers

How long should I wash my hands?

You should scrub your hands, including the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your fingernails for **at least 20 seconds**.

Tip: Sing the "ABC" song from beginning to end!

What should I use to wash my hands?

Soap and running water are the most effective at getting rid of germs in most situations. Don't forget to dry your hands. Damp hands are 1,000 times more likely to spread bacteria.

If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Step by Step:

1. **Wet** your hands with running water

2. **Apply** soap

3. **Scrub** your hands for **at least 20 seconds,** making sure to get the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your fingernails

4. **Rinse** your hands under clean, running water

5. **Dry** your hands using a clean paper towel or an air dryer

6. **Turn off** sink with a paper towel or your elbow.

For additional guidance and information, call 330-723-9688, option 2 to speak with a public health nurse.

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Contact Us

330-723-9688   www.medinahealth.org