

# Fact Sheet: Handwashing

The most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of illness is to wash your hands thoroughly and often. If you work with children please consider teaching them how to wash their hands using the same methods described below.

## The best way to wash hands

- Rub your hands together quickly for at least 20 seconds using warm running water and soap. (Singing “Happy Birthday” is an easy way to time yourself).
- Make sure that you have lots of bubbles.
- Wash under fingernails, between fingers, backs of hands and wrists.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands with a single-use paper towel or hot air blow dryer.
- If your towel dispenser has a handle, be sure to roll the paper down before you wash your hands. This helps to insure that you will not pick up new germs from the handle.
- For hand-held faucets, turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands so you will not pick up new germs on your clean hands. You may want to open the bathroom door, if possible, with the same paper towel and then throw it away.

## These are the times you should wash your hands:

- After you use the bathroom or help a child use the bathroom, or change a diaper
- After you handle items soiled with body fluids or wastes such as blood, vomit, urine, or stool.
- After contact with discharge from the nose, eyes or mouth.
- Before you prepare or serve food.
- Before you eat or drink.

## These are times you should wash your children’s hands:

- When they arrive home from day care, school or a friend’s home, come in from outdoors.
- After they use the toilet or have their diaper changed.
- After they have touched a child who may be sick.
- After touching or playing with animals/pets.
- Before they eat or drink.

**Remember: It is never too late and no child is too young to learn how to protect themselves from germs!!**

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self -diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.*



Visit our website at: <http://publichealth.eWashtenaw.org>

Or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

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