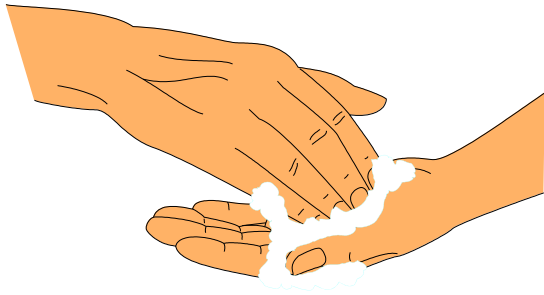## Why should you wash your hands?

Handwashing is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infection. Infections are caused by "germs" that can be bacteria or viruses that you pick up from other people or by touching objects around you. Some common infections that are caused by germs are colds, flu, and gastrointestinal illnesses like Shigellosis.

If you do pick up germs on your hands--- **Handwashing** can help prevent you from getting sick and can also stop you from spreading the germs to others.

When should you wash your hands?

- Whenever hands are obviously soiled or dirty
- After sneezing, coughing, and blowing or wiping your nose
- After using the restroom
- Before and after handling food
- Before eating meals or snacks
- Before touching your eyes or mouth
- After changing a baby's diaper
- After playing with or petting animals
- As frequently as possible when you are around sick people

How should you wash your hands?

- Wet hands under warm, running water
- Apply soap and lather and scrub hands and wrists for 10-15 seconds
- Pay particular attention to the nails, between the fingers, and backs of the hands because this is where "germs" like to hide
- Rinse well under a stream of water
- Dry thoroughly to avoid chapping
- If you are not in your home, use a paper towel rather than clean hands to turn off the faucet
- Apply hand lotion as needed
- If you are taking care of children or a bed-ridden patient help them wash their hands

Make the Germs Go Away!

Waterless Hand Sanitizers

Waterless hand sanitizers are alcohol rinses or gels that can kill the germs on your hands. They do not remove dirt. If your hands are soiled, you must first wash your hands with soap and water.

How do you use a hand sanitizer?

- Remove any dirt from your hands
- Put the hand sanitizer in the cup of your hand and rub together
- Be sure to coat all surfaces of your hands
- Rub your hands until they feel completely dry; this will take about 15 seconds.

Germs are all around us-- Handwashing is an easy and important step that you can do to keep yourself healthy. By washing your hands in the right way --- people around you will be healthier, too!

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HANDWASHING

Make the Germs Go Away !