

## When should I wash my hands?

### Before:

- Eating.
- During and after handling or preparing food.
- Dressing a wound, giving medicine or inserting contact lenses.

### After:

- Touching blood or body fluids (like vomit, nasal secretions or saliva).
- Changing a diaper.
- Using the bathroom.
- Handling animals or their toys, leashes or waste.
- Touching something that could be contaminated (such as a trash can, cleaning cloth, drain or soil).

**Remember to always wash your hands when someone in your home is sick and whenever your hands look dirty.**

## What are some ways to help children learn good hand-washing techniques?

It is important to encourage and help children wash their hands before eating, after playing outdoors or with pets, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their noses.

Even though hands may appear to be clean, they may carry germs that can cause disease.

Don't assume that children know how to wash their hands. Supervision, especially in a day-care setting, is important in forming good hand-washing habits in children. Remember, children learn by example! Let them observe good hand-washing technique from the adults who care for them.

## For More Information

Contact your local public health unit, or call the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.2378 or 800.472.2180.



# Hand Washing

## 5 Easy Steps To Prevent Disease!



# 5 Easy Steps To Prevent Disease



**1.** Wet hands and apply liquid, bar or powder soap.



**2.** Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather, and scrub all surfaces.

- Scrub well for 20 seconds! It takes that long to dislodge and remove stubborn germs. To time yourself, sing the ABCs!



**3.** Rinse hands well under running water.



**4.** Dry hands using a paper towel or air dryer.



**5.** If possible, use a paper towel to turn off faucet.

## Why is hand washing important?

Hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of diseases.

## What type of soap should I use?

You can use any type of soap; it does not need to be antibacterial to work. Bar soap should be kept in a self-draining holder that is cleaned thoroughly before new bars are put out. Liquid soap containers should be used until empty and cleaned before you refill the container.

To prevent chapping, use a mild soap with warm water, pat rather than rub hands dry, and apply lotion liberally and frequently.

## May I use over-the-counter alcohol sanitizers for washing my hands?

These products, which can be found wherever soap is sold, are very effective at killing germs on the hands, as long as your hands are not visibly dirty. Hand sanitizers should be used when soap and water are not available.

If your hands look dirty but you have no other way to wash your hands, use the sanitizer, but wash with soap and water as soon as you can.