

VITRA Health

Caregiver Education March Edition

Universal Precautions & Infection Control



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Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives

When & How to Wash Your Hands

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If clean, running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands.

When should you wash your hands?

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

How should you wash your hands?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the numbers of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs and might not remove harmful chemicals.

Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy!

How to use hand sanitizers?

- ✓ Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).

- ✓ Rub your hands together.
- ✓ Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

OSHA safety procedures for universal precautions

Employees must follow proper OSHA safety procedures when there is potential for coming in contact with hazard. For those responsible for cleaning and disposing of potential sources of contamination, though, avoidance is not an option. They are simple and effective actions that, when properly performed, can protect employees from bloodborne pathogens.

Universal precautions include:

- ✓ Coaching injured individuals who only have minor wounds to apply bandages to themselves.
- ✓ Treat any unknown substance or object that could potentially be contaminated with a bloodborne pathogen as though it is contaminated. This is especially true for those who dispose of trash, as many people improperly dispose of objects contaminated with blood.
- ✓ Always use barriers such as gloves when dealing with blood or other bodily fluids. Even a plastic bag can be used as a glove in an emergency, though make sure to check for holes first.
- ✓ Carefully remove and dispose of gloves, masks, and/or eye protection that might be infected in special biohazard waste bags or containers.
- ✓ Wash hands immediately after handling potentially contaminated materials, even if gloves were worn.

Sources: Cdc.gov & www.Osha.gov