

INFLUENZA SELF-CARE—CLEAN YOUR HANDS

CLEAN YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

Cleaning your hands properly is an effective way to reduce your chances of getting sick with influenza or spreading the virus.

How to Wash Hands with Soap and Water

1. Use regular soap (liquid or bar soap). Antibacterial soap is not necessary and can promote resistance to antibiotics.
2. Wet hands with warm, running water and lather well.
3. Rub the hands together for about the amount of time it would take to sing the song, “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,” (about 15 to 20 seconds).
4. Scrub all over, including the backs of the hands, the wrists, between the fingers and under the finger nails.
5. Rinse under running water (for about 10 seconds).
6. Dry with a clean or disposable towel.

If using a public restroom, use a disposable towel to turn off the faucet to avoid further contact with the tap.

Store liquid soaps in closed containers and do not top up liquid soap containers. When the soap container is empty, it should be washed and dried before refilling with liquid soap.

How to Clean Hands with Hand Sanitizer (Gels, Liquids, and Foams)

When soap and water are not available, hand sanitizers are an excellent choice. Use only alcohol-based hand rubs. They should contain at least 60 percent alcohol.

1. Put some of the hand sanitizer (gel, liquid, or foam) on the palm of your hand and rub your hands together.
2. Cover all surfaces, including fingers and wrists, and rub until dry (about 15 to 25 seconds).
3. Hand sanitizers don't work if hands are soiled. When hands are soiled, wash with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a towelette that contains detergent. Then use a hand sanitizer.

Hand sanitizers work better than hand washing to kill bacteria and viruses if used properly. They cause less skin dryness and irritation than hand washing.

Young children need help when using hand sanitizers. This is to make sure that their hands are dry before they touch anything or put their hands in their mouths.

Wash your hands before

- handling or eating food or feeding others
- brushing or flossing teeth
- putting in or taking out contact lenses
- treating wounds or cuts

Wash your hands after

- having any contact with a person who is sick or their immediate environment
- going to the toilet, helping someone else use the toilet, or changing a diaper
- blowing your nose or wiping someone else's nose
- coughing or sneezing
- treating wounds or cuts
- handling garbage
- returning home from school, work, or shopping
- Children should wash their hands after playing with toys shared with other children.

Encourage children to wash their hands often.

- Teach by example.
- Help young children wash their hands.
- Make sure the sink, soap, and towels are within reach.
- Place hand washing reminders at eye level for children.