# Washing Your Hands The Right Way

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO WASH MY HANDS THE RIGHT WAY?

The best way to get germs and dirt off your hands is to wash them the right way. Germs can get into your body and cause an infection. If you have an infection, you can leave germs on the things you touch, and other people can get the infection when they touch those things.

Washing your hands with soap and water does not kill the germs that may be on your hands, but it loosens the dirt, germs and skin oils and slides them off your skin.

## WHEN SHOULD I WASH MY HANDS OR USE A HAND-WASHING ALCOHOL GEL?

- Whenever your hands are dirty or sticky.
- After going to the bathroom.
- Before you put anything (such as your hands or pills) in your mouth.
- Before you touch food, or start to eat.
- When you come home from outside.
- After you change a baby's diaper.
- After you handle money.
- After taking care of a sick person.

## WHAT IS THE RIGHT WAY TO WASH MY HANDS?

- Wet your hands under running water.
- Soap your hands and wrists.
- Rub your hands together. Be sure to clean around each finger, and under your nails.
- Keep rubbing for **at least** 15 seconds. That is about the time it takes to hum “Happy Birthday”.
- Rinse under running water. Point your fingers down so the dirty water does not run up your arms.
- Blot the water off your hands with a clean towel. Rubbing hard will rub your skin raw.
- If you are out in a public place, a hot-air hand dryer is the best way to dry your hands. A clean paper towel is fine.

## MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

*Easy-to-Read style based on content from Parkland Health & Hospital System, Dallas, Texas*

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