

Guidelines for Good Handwashing

Handwashing, when done correctly, is an important personal hygiene practice to prevent contracting and spreading communicable diseases.

When should we wash our hands?

1. Before touching the eyes, nose and mouth
2. Before eating or handling food
3. After using the toilet
4. When hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions, e.g. after coughing or sneezing
5. After touching public installations or equipment, such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs
6. After changing diapers or handling soiled articles when looking after young children or the sick

Steps for good handwashing

1. Wet hands under running water.
2. Apply liquid soap and rub hands together to make a soapy lather.
3. Away from the running water, rub the palms, backs of hands, between fingers, backs of fingers, thumbs, finger tips and wrists. Do this for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands thoroughly with either a clean cotton towel, a paper towel, or a hand dryer.
6. The cleaned hands should not touch the water tap directly again.
 - The tap may be turned off by using the towel wrapping the faucet; or
 - after splashing water to clean the faucet; or
 - by another person.

Please note:

- Towels should never be shared.
- Used paper towel should be properly disposed of.
- Personal towels to be reused must be stored properly and washed at least once daily. It is even better to have more than one towel for frequent replacement.
- When hands are not visibly soiled, application of 70-80% alcohol-based handrub is equally effective for disinfection.

