## **Handwashing: Keeping Your** Family Healthy





Handwashing is an easy, cheap and effective way to prevent the spread of germs and keep kids and adults healthy. When your family is healthy, you don't have to worry about missing school, work, or other activities.

### HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP HANDWASHING SKILLS

Parents and caretakers play an important role in teaching children to wash their hands. Handwashing can become a lifelong healthy habit if you start teaching it at an early age. Teach kids the five easy steps for handwashing—wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry—and the key times to wash hands, such as after using the bathroom or before eating. You can find ways to make it fun, like making up your own handwashing song or turning it into a game.

#### LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Young children learn by imitating the behaviors of adults in their lives. When you make handwashing part of your routine, you're setting an example for your children to follow.



### **GIVE FREQUENT REMINDERS**

Building handwashing skills takes time. At first, your child will need regular reminders of how and when to wash hands. It is especially important to remind children to wash their hands after using the bathroom,

## Handwashing: Keeping Your Family Healthy



#### Handwashing can prevent

- 1 in 3 cases of diarrhea
- 1 in 5 cases respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu



before eating, after touching pets, after playing outside, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose. But once handwashing becomes a habit and a regular part of your child's day, they will practice it throughout their lives.

# WHAT IF SOAP AND WATER AREN'T AVAILABLE?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.

Did you know? Baby wipes may make your hands look clean, but they're not designed to remove germs from your hands. CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water when possible.

Remember to make handwashing a healthy habit at home, school and at play!

cdc.gov/handwashing



**DC Health Mission:** The District of Columbia Department of Health promotes health, wellness and equity across the District, and protects the safety of residents, visitors and those doing business in our nations's capital.

For more information about DC Health, including additional services, partnership opportunities, and for additional languages, call (202) 442-5955 or visit dchealth.dc.gov. For information on any District Government program, call 311.

Find us on









Amharic (hማርኛ) Chinese (中文) French (Français) Korean (한국어) Spanish (Español) Vietnamese (Tiếng Việt)