



# Better Handwashing

FAST FACTS

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**One of the easiest and most inexpensive ways to prevent infection and illness from pervading your office is through the simple act of handwashing.**

Not convinced? Consider that study after study finds computer keyboards far dirtier than toilet seats. And keyboards are not the only sources of germs in the office. Think about where you have set your cell phone or where you have placed your ID badge, how many people have touched the office photocopier or the water cooler...it is easy to see over the course of a day in the office how quickly a simple sickness can be spread.

Beyond the office, think about all that you encounter in your workday from your building, your favorite lunch spot, and your commute. People unconsciously touch their eyes, nose, and mouth throughout the day and then touch everyday objects such as elevator buttons, tables, and handrails. One innocent eye rub can cause a chain reaction of illness to cover a wide area in just a short period of time. However, just 20 seconds of handwashing can stop germs from being spread.

## CDC TIPS TO KEEP EVERYONE SAFE

- **Wet your hands** with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather your hands** by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.** Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel.

## HANDWASHING IS ALWAYS RECOMMENDED:

- Before preparing food or eating.
- After using the bathroom.
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- After handling garbage.
- When your hands are visibly dirty.
- If your job requires work on a construction site or you come in contact with chemicals or other hazardous materials.

## WAYS TO HELP ENCOURAGE HANDWASHING AT WORK:

- Make sure soap dispensers and paper towels are stocked and employees know where to ask for more supplies.
- Inquire whether employees have any skin sensitivities and provide alternative soaps/towels, if necessary.
- Consider posting a sign in the bathroom and/or kitchen area of your office to remind employees of the importance of handwashing in the workplace.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1999-11-01-2>

# Spreading germs is OUT. Handwashing is IN!



Handwashing is one of the most important things we can do to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

## HANDWASHING IN THE OFFICE

The office environment provides many opportunities to interact with an array of people in close quarters. It is advisable to wash hands after meetings and other occasions where you shake hands with many people. The more you can keep germs away, the more productive your workplace will be.

## WHAT IF THERE IS NO ACCESS TO A SINK IN OUR OFFICE?

Although washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the spread of germs, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be an effective alternative if soap and water are not available. Based on numerous studies, the CDC recommends to effectively kill germs it is best to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. However, it is important to remember that sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs or harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and heavy metals. Hand sanitizer should be applied into the palm of one hand and rubbed all over the surfaces of both hands until your hands are completely dry.

## ARE THERE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SOME WORKPLACES?

According to OSHA: "Facilities for proper handwashing need to be readily available in all areas where occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens is anticipated, since gloves may not provide complete protection against bloodborne pathogens."