

# Are you washing your hands the right way?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says washing your hands is like a "do-it-yourself" vaccine. Washing your hands properly and at the right time will slash your risk of getting sick with illnesses like colds, flu and stomach bugs that cause diarrhea and vomiting.

Handwashing seems simple. But, there are some steps you must take to ensure your hands are truly clean.



## THE FIVE STEPS



**1.** Wet your hands with clean, running water. It can be warm or cold. Then turn off the water and apply soap to your hands.



**2.** Rub hands together to get a lather. Cover the palms, backs of hands, between the fingers and under the nails.



**3.** Continue scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Count to 20 slowly or sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.



**4.** Rinse all the soap off under clean, running water.



**5.** Dry your hands using a clean towel. If one is not available, allow them to air dry completely.

## ***Don't touch your face – a win-win***

It's impossible for hands to stay clean all the time. Even if you've just washed them, try to avoid touching your face, eyes, nose and mouth. This will help keep you from letting germs into your body.

Also, this habit helps protect those around you. If you're sick and you touch your face, you could be putting germs onto your hands that can be spread to others.

## ***What about hand sanitizer?***

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are handy to keep in a pocket or purse. Hand sanitizers do clean, but they may not remove all germs, the CDC says. They also won't remove chemicals or visible dirt very well.

In short, keep hand sanitizer with you, and use it when you've touched something that may be germ (like a door handle or ATM buttons). But, get to a sink to wash your hands whenever you can.

**Good hand hygiene is good for everyone — except germs. Wash up to stay healthy!**