

Hand Hygiene for you and your child

What is hand hygiene?

Hand hygiene means removing dirt and germs from your hands by cleaning your hands with soap and water or killing germs on your hands by using an antiseptic such as alcohol hand gel.

Why is hand hygiene important?

The most common way to spread germs from person to person is on the hands. Performing hand hygiene removes germs before they can be spread to someone else. Hand hygiene also helps prevent infections caused by germs.

When should my child and I perform hand hygiene?

You should do hand hygiene often, including:

- Before going into your child's room
- Before leaving your child's room
- After taking off your mask, gloves, and gown if you wear them for any reason
- Before eating
- After using the restroom
- After touching surfaces or medical equipment in your child's room

How to wash your hands with soap and water

Always use soap and water to clean your hands when they are visibly dirty.

1. **Wet** your hands with running water.
2. **Apply** soap and rub it over all parts of your hands and nails for at least 20 seconds.

3. **Rinse** off the soap with water and keep your fingers pointing down.
4. **Dry** hands with paper towel.
5. **Use** the paper towel to turn off the faucet with the paper towel so that your hands do not get dirty again.

How to use alcohol hand gel

Use alcohol hand gel to clean your hands when they are not visibly dirty.

1. **Squirt** two pumps of gel into the palm of one hand.
2. **Rub** the gel over all parts of your hands and nails for at least 20 seconds or until it is dry.

When will my health care team perform hand hygiene?

Staff will do hand hygiene often when taking care of your child, including:

- Before and after caring for your child
- After taking off gloves, gown, or mask
- After leaving your child's room

Be informed. Be empowered. Be prepared.

Speak up. Ask your child's health care team if they have performed hand hygiene. Ask your family members and visitors to do the same with either soap and water or two pumps of alcohol hand gel.

Questions?

Ask your nurse, doctor, or call the Hospital Epidemiology Service at 301-496-2209.

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