

Wash Up on the Facts for Handwashing Awareness Week



The first week of December is Handwashing Awareness Week. Take a few moments to ensure you're doing everything you should be in the fight against germs.

Frequently washing your hands with soap is an easy and effective way to prevent the spread of germs. After all, germs are everywhere. An estimated 3,000 droplets of respiratory pathogens are expelled with every cough, and an estimated 40,000 droplets with every sneeze—not to mention the germs that come from raw foods and pets.



Handwashing Basics

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a simple, five-step process for handwashing.

1. **Wet your hands** with clean water, then turn off the water to not waste a drop.
2. **Apply soap** and rub into a lather, ensuring you cover your fingers, palms, backs of your hands and under your fingernails with soap.
3. **Scrub the soap** all over your hands for about 20 seconds.
4. Turn the water back on and **rinse the soap off**.
5. **Wipe your hands dry** with a clean towel or use an air dryer.

When to Wash

Washing hands after going to the bathroom should be a key part of every child's potty training routine. Even though reaching for soap and water after a bathroom break has become second nature, don't forget to also wash your hands:

- After taking out the **garbage**
- After touching an **animal** or handling an object an animal was previously in contact with
- After using **public transportation**, such as a bus, ferry or subway
- Before and after **taking care of a wound**
- Before, during and after **handling food**



Your provider can offer more tips to help protect you from germs. Find a provider: weillcornell.org/doctors