

Handwashing



Social Story



My hands get dirty quite often. Sometimes I can see the dirt, like when I'm digging in the dirt or painting. Other times, I can't see the dirt on my hand. Germs, for example, are an invisible form of dirt. I can't see the germs, but they can make my hands quite dirty and can make myself or others sick if I don't wash the germs off.



Washing my hands with soap and water is the best way to keep my hands clean and to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses. I can help keep myself and others healthy when I wash my hands regularly.



There are lots of times when I need to wash my hands. For instance, I need to wash my hands after using the toilet or after blowing my nose. I should also wash my hands before eating or before preparing a meal.



I should also get in the habit of washing my hands every time I enter my house after playing outside and after returning home from public places such as school, the park, a grocery store, or the library.



To wash my hands, I first need to turn on the tap on the sink. Some sinks have two taps to turn on and adjust, one for each hot and cold water. Some sinks only have one tap to turn on and adjust. And other sinks are automatic and turn on when I wave my hand underneath it.



I should use warm water to wash my hands. I can put my hand under the water to test it and to make sure it's not too hot or too cold. I can turn and adjust the taps until the water temperature is just right.



Next, I need to put some soap on my hands. Some soaps are solid and come as a solid bar. Other soaps are liquid or foamy.



I need to rub the soap all over my hands, top and bottom. I also need to rub soap all over my fingers, including the fingertips and underneath the nails. Every part of my hand should be scrubbed with soap.



I should wash my hands for at least 20 seconds. That's about as long as it takes for me to sing the ABCs.



After I have scrubbed with soap for 20 seconds, I need to rinse the soap off of my hands by putting my hands back under the running water.



Now that my hands are clean I need to turn off the tap. If the water faucet is automatic, then I can simply remove my hands from underneath the faucet. The water will turn off on its own within a few seconds.



If I had to turn taps on to make the water run, then I will need to remember to turn the taps off too. Taps, however, can be covered in dirt and germs. Since my hands are now clean, I don't want to get them dirty again. I can turn the taps off using paper towel, if available, or I can use another part of my body, such as my elbows, to turn off the taps.



My hands will still be wet at this point, so now I need to dry my hands using a towel or paper towel. If I use paper towel to dry my hands, then I need to throw the towel in the garbage when I'm done.



Some public washrooms might have hand dryers. Some hand dryers require me to press a button to turn on and others do not. I place my hands underneath the dryer vent and then it blows warm air onto my hands. However, hand dryers are often very loud and noisy. If I don't like the sound of hand dryers, then I can simply use paper towel instead.



Sometimes I might use hand sanitizer to quickly wash my hands instead of using soap and water. Hand sanitizer is a gel or foam that I can rub into my hands and then let air dry. It's great to use when I need to quickly wash my hands, but don't have access to soap and running water. It's still best to use soap and water to clean my hands though.



It's really important to wash my hands regularly as it helps keep me and those around me healthy.