



Handwashing in Communities: Clean Hands Save Lives

[Handwashing in Communities: Clean Hands Save Lives Home](#)

Global Handwashing Day



Handwashing with soap and water is one of the simplest, most effective ways to stop the spread of germs and stay healthy. Keeping hands clean can prevent 1 in 3 diarrheal illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as the **common cold** or flu.

Each year on October 15, CDC works with global partners and colleagues to highlight [Global Handwashing Day](#) and raise awareness about the importance of handwashing with soap and water.

Global Handwashing Day is a yearly reminder that handwashing with soap and water is one of the best steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. This year's theme, "Unite for Universal Hand Hygiene," calls for coordinated action as we actively work toward universal hand hygiene.

Handwashing in Communities

Many germs that can make people sick are spread when we don't wash our hands with soap and clean, running water. That is why handwashing is so important, especially at **key times** such as after using the bathroom, when preparing food, before eating, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.

Handwashing with soap and water is simple and inexpensive, and it can significantly reduce the number of young **children who get sick**. Teaching people about handwashing helps them and their communities stay healthy. Studies show that handwashing education in the community can:

- Reduce the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by about 23%–40%
- Reduce the number of school days children missed because of gastrointestinal illness by 29%–57%
- Reduce diarrheal illness in people with weakened immune systems by about 58%
- Reduce respiratory illnesses, like colds, in the general population by about 16%–21%

Learn more about [hand hygiene at home and around your community](#).





Instagram:

[[English](#)] [[Español](#)]

Facebook/Twitter:

[[English](#)] [[Español](#)]

Get Involved

People and communities around the world celebrate Global Handwashing Day in many ways. CDC has developed [resources and materials](#) to help you promote handwashing in your community by:

- Downloading resources from CDC's national handwashing campaign, *Life is Better with Clean Hands*
- Printing and sharing [stickers](#) to remind people how to wash their hands the right way
- Sharing [videos](#) that provide important information about handwashing
- Downloading and sharing [buttons and badges](#) about handwashing on your website or social media account
- Ordering [free handwashing posters](#) to remind everyone to fight off germs by washing their hands

Share messages on social media!

Share the social media posts and graphics below to promote Global Handwashing Day and use the #GlobalHandwashingDay hashtag. You can also visit CDC's [social media library](#) for more messages to raise awareness about the importance of handwashing.

Images for Facebook/Twitter



Follow the 5 steps to
wash hands the right
way: wet, lather,
scrub, rinse, and dry.

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

To download image, right click on the large image and click "Save picture as"



#KeepHandsClean

by scrubbing your
hands for 20 seconds
with soap and water.

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-A

**Clean hands often,
especially after
blowing your
nose, coughing
or sneezing.**

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-A

**Wash your hands
at key times
throughout the day,
especially after using
the bathroom and
before eating.**

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-C

**Follow the 5 steps to
wash hands the right
way: wet, lather,
scrub, rinse, and dry.**

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-C

#KeepHandsClean

**by scrubbing your
hands for 20 seconds
with soap and water.**

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-C

**Clean hands often,
especially after
blowing your
nose, coughing,
or sneezing.**

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-C

**Wash your hands
at key times
throughout the day,
especially after using
the bathroom and
before eating.**

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



**Follow the
5 steps to
wash hands
the right way:
wet, lather, scrub,
rinse, and dry.**

#KeepHandsClean

www.cdc.gov/handwashing



CS333665-B

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#KeepHandsClean

**by scrubbing your hands
for 20 seconds with soap
and water.**



CS333665-B

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

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**Clean hands
often,
especially
after blowing
your nose,
coughing, or
sneezing.**

#KeepHandsClean



CS333665-B

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

To download image, right click on the large image and click "Save picture as"



Wash your hands at key times throughout the day, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.

#KeepHandsClean



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www.cdc.gov/handwashing

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Social Media Posts

*Promote
Global
Handwashing
Day*

Post 1: #GlobalHandwashingDay is October 15! Handwashing with soap and water can help protect you, your household, and your community from getting sick from germs. <https://bit.ly/3QlvXuv> 

Post 2: Germs are everywhere—especially on our hands and the things we touch. This #GlobalHandwashingDay, make handwashing with soap your habit to stay healthy! <https://bit.ly/3QlvXuv> 

How & When to Wash Your Hands **Post 1:** Handwashing with soap and water is one of the best ways to get rid of germs and protect yourself and those around you from getting sick. Remember the five steps! Wet – Lather – Scrub (for at least 20 seconds) – Rinse – Dry. <https://bit.ly/3PF5Eoh> 

Post 2: It's #GlobalHandwashingDay! Remind your loved ones that washing hands with soap and water is important, especially:

- before, during, and after preparing food
- before and after eating food
- after using the toilet
- after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

Learn more about when to wash your hands: <https://bit.ly/3PF5Eoh> 

Why You Should Wash Your Hands **Post 1:** On #GlobalHandwashingDay, encourage people to make handwashing with soap and water a healthy habit. Remind them that washing hands at key times during the day helps keep everyone safe from illnesses. <https://bit.ly/3QJDBF4> 

Post 2: #DYK handwashing can help prevent diarrheal and respiratory diseases? Check out the science behind why it's important to wash your hands at key times like before eating and after using the bathroom. <https://bit.ly/3QJDBF4>  #GlobalHandwashingDay

Teach Kids About Handwashing **Post 1:** This #GlobalHandwashingDay, teach kids the five steps to handwashing—wet, lather, scrub, rinse, and dry—and the best times to wash hands, like after using the bathroom and before eating. <https://bit.ly/3QlvXuv> 

Post 2: It's #GlobalHandwashingDay! Remind kids that handwashing is their germ-fighting superpower. <https://bit.ly/3QlvXuv> 

Post 3: Handwashing is the best way kids can prevent spreading germs to their friends and family. Lead by example to help the little ones make handwashing with soap their lifelong healthy habit. #GlobalHandwashingDay <https://bit.ly/3QlvXuv> 

Create your own newsletter and tailor it for your network.

Promote Global Handwashing Day and the importance of handwashing by including announcements in a newsletter, publication, email, or web page. Use these sample newsletter blurbs or customize and tailor them for your own networks.

Sample Newsletter Announcements

Spread the Word About Global Handwashing Day!

Each year on October 15, [Global Handwashing Day](#) highlights the importance of handwashing with soap and water, especially during [key times](#) throughout the day. CDC has developed resources to promote handwashing in your community on Global Handwashing Day and throughout the year!

Washing your hands is easy—and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Studies have shown that handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related sicknesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu.

Follow these five steps every time.

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

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains **at least 60% alcohol**.

For more information on how clean hands save lives, visit www.cdc.gov/handwashing.

Promote Handwashing in Schools

[Global Handwashing Day](#), celebrated each year on October 15, highlights the importance of handwashing with soap and water, especially during key times throughout the day. Studies have shown that handwashing in schools can lead to fewer diarrhea-related sicknesses and respiratory infections, which can result in fewer missed school days.

To help keep yourself, students, and staff healthy, you can use CDC's communication resources and promote handwashing on Global Handwashing Day and throughout the year!

Remind students to make handwashing a healthy habit at home, at school, and at play by:

- Teaching kids the five easy steps for handwashing—wet, lather, scrub (for 20 seconds), rinse, and dry—and the key times to wash hands, such as after using the bathroom or before eating.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Caution! Supervise young children under the age of six when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol or contact with eyes.
- Giving frequent reminders so that handwashing becomes a habit and a regular part of your students' days.
- Leading by example by washing your hands.

For more information on how clean hands save lives, visit www.cdc.gov/handwashing.

Teach Your Children About Handwashing. Lead by Example!

Each year on October 15, [Global Handwashing Day](#) reminds us about the importance of handwashing with soap and water, especially during [key times](#) throughout the day. CDC encourages parents and caregivers to make clean hands a healthy habit to keep themselves and their family safe.

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Studies have shown that handwashing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related sicknesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu. When your family is healthy, you don't have to worry about missing school, work, or other activities.

Help your children make handwashing a healthy habit at home, school, and play.

- Teach kids the five easy steps for handwashing—wet, lather, scrub (for 20 seconds), rinse, and dry—and the key times to wash hands, such as after using the bathroom or before eating.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - **Caution!** Supervise young children under the age of six when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol or contact with eyes.
- Give frequent reminders so that handwashing becomes a habit and a regular part of your child's day.
- Lead by example.

For more information on how clean hands save lives, visit www.cdc.gov/handwashing.

Clean Hands Help Keep Everyone Healthy!

Each year on October 15, CDC observes Global Handwashing Day to remind people about the importance of hand hygiene to health. Handwashing is one of the most important things you can do to prevent food poisoning. Follow these handwashing tips when preparing food:

- **Wash hands before, during, and after preparing food.** Handwashing at key times when germs can spread is one of the best ways to keep everyone healthy. Be sure to wash before preparing any food and after touching raw meat, chicken and other poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- **Wash hands before and after using gloves.** Gloves can get contaminated with germs from your hands. Be sure to wash your hands before and after using gloves to prevent the spread of germs.
- **Wash your hands the right way.** Follow the steps. Wet your hands with water before applying soap. Scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails for at least 20 seconds before, during, and after handling any food.

Get more information from CDC on how to [prevent food poisoning](#).

[Global Handwashing Day](#), celebrated each year on October 15, highlights the importance of handwashing with soap and water, especially during key times throughout the day. Handwashing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness to others. Germs can spread easily in offices where employees share the same space, supplies, and equipment. CDC recommends washing hands often, especially during key times when you are likely to get and spread germs.

In workplaces, these key times are:

- **Before** eating lunch or preparing food
- **After** using the bathroom
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol. For more information, visit CDC's page on [hand hygiene at work](#).

More Information

- [Frequent Questions About Hand Hygiene](#)
- [Show Me the Science](#)
- [Handwashing: A Family Activity](#)
- [Hand Sanitizer Use Out and About](#)
- [Hand Hygiene at School](#)
- [Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](#)
- [COVID-19: How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- [Healthy Schools, Healthy People](#) 
- [UNICEF and WHO: Hand Hygiene for All](#) 
- [CDC and Partners Support Efforts to Improve Universal Hand Hygiene](#)