EDUCATION

Teaching Children About the Flu

Lesson Plans and Activities for Child Care and Early Childhood Programs

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CS219678-A

Teaching Children About the Flu

Lesson plans and activities for child care and early childhood programs.

As a child care provider, you play a very important role. You nurture and teach the children in your care. You offer a safe atmosphere where the children can learn and have fun and where parents can feel good about the care their children are receiving.

In addition to providing good child care, you also want to make sure the children in your facility stay healthy. Young children and your staff members can get sick with the seasonal flu. Use the lessons and activities in this booklet to teach children about the flu, hand washing, and cough and sneeze etiquette.

Hang the colorful and informative posters to remind children and staff about good hygiene habits to use now and during flu season. We've also included handouts for parents to help them reinforce good hygiene habits at home.

Help all the children in your child care facility make good hygiene a habit.

For more information about flu:

Visit www.cdc.gov or www.flu.gov.

Or call CDC 24 hours a day:

- 1 (800) CDC-INFO (232-4636). Services in English and Spanish.
- TTY: 1 (888) 232-6348

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Background Information for All Lessons

You will find lessons for children ages 3 to 10 in this resource guide. Use the information you learn to teach children about the flu, the importance of hand washing, and reasons to cover their coughs and sneezes.

General information to share with children

- Germs can make you sick. People can pass colds and flu through germs.
- Germs are everywhere. They are so small that you cannot see them without a microscope.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze so you don't pass germs on to others. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands the right way to get rid of germs and lower the chance of spreading germs. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Use alcohol-based hand rubs or wipes when soap and water are not available.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth until your hands are clean because germs spread that way. Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to keep from getting sick and spreading illness.

Wash hands:

- After you cough or sneeze
- After using the toilet
- After you play outside
- After shaking hands with other people
- After you touch animals, including your pet
- Before you eat or touch food

General information to share with children about how flu spreads

- The flu spreads mostly from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the flu. You may also get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching your mouth or nose.
- Tell children to let an adult know if they feel sick.

Help the children in your child care facility practice good hygiene and lower the spread of germs.

Reinforce hygiene habits with children ages 3 to 7 by:

- Encouraging younger children to cover their cough with a tissue or cough into their sleeve. Encouraging children to wash their hands.
- Asking children discussion questions found in Lessons 1 and 2 (pages 6 and 17).
- Placing a check sheet with each child's name near the sink. Ask a staff member to oversee hand washing. Give a sticker to children who wash their hands the right way.
- Posting children's hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette art work and pledges on the wall (Handout #6).

Reinforce hygiene habits with children ages 8 to 10 by:

- Encouraging older children to cover their cough with a tissue or cough into their sleeve. Encouraging children to wash their hands.
- Placing stickers on the children's handouts.
- Asking children discussion questions found in Lesson 3 (page 23).
- Posting children's signed pledges on the wall (Handout #11).

Lesson Plans and Activities for Children Ages 3 to 7

You will find Lessons 1 and 2 in this section.

1

Hand Washing Lesson Plan for Children Ages 3 to 7

Lesson 1

Read the background information for all lessons on page 2 of this guide. Teach the children about how germs spread and about the flu. Throughout the next week, check to see if children are practicing good hygiene. Give stickers to children who wash their hands the right way. Sing our hand washing version of the "If You're Happy and You Know It" song on page 7. Sing with children several times each week for three or more weeks to help children get in the habit of correct hand washing.

Reasons for this lesson:

- To teach children that keeping their hands clean is one of the best ways to keep from getting sick and spreading illnesses such as the flu
- To teach children the right way to wash their hands
- To stop spreading germs and have better health

Time:

- 15 minutes for circle time to teach the lesson and practice singing. 15 minutes for completing the handouts.

Supplies:

- Alcohol-based hand rub with pump for circle time. Or use unscented hand lotion if you don't use alcohol-based hand rub in your childcare setting.
- **Handouts #1** to **#6**. Offer handouts based on the age and skill level of the children in your childcare facility.
- Crayons or colored markers for **Handouts #1** to **#6**
- Scissors, glue stick and construction paper for **Handouts #3** and **#4**

Activities:

- Circle time—singing, questions and answers, practicing hand washing
- Coloring, connecting the dots, cutting, gluing a puzzle

Use these questions about hand washing and cough etiquette when you present the Lessons 1 and 2 to children ages 3 to 7.

Question: Why is it important to use soap and running water when you wash your hands?

Answer: To make sure the dirt and germs go away.

Question: Why is it important to get the germs off your hands?

Answer: So you don't get sick or make others around you sick.

Question: How long should you rub your hands together when washing your hands?

Answer: You should rub your hands together for 20 seconds—long enough to sing the "Happy Hand Washing" song twice or our version of "If You're Happy and You Know It." You can find these songs on page 7 in this lesson.

Question: How are germs (like viruses) passed?

Answer: Germs are passed when you cough or sneeze into your hands and touch other objects, or when you don't cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Question: How can we keep from spreading our germs to other people and making them sick?

Answer: Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough using a tissue. Then throw the tissue away. When there is no tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve. If you cough or sneeze into your hands, wash them for 20 or more seconds.

Germs get on your hands and then on other objects (doorknobs, toys, desks, etc.).

Circle time and singing

- Ask children to sit in a circle. Explain to the children that during circle time they will be learning more about washing their hands to get rid of germs.
- Teach one or both of the following hand washing songs.

Happy Hand Washing

(sung to the tune of "Happy Birthday")

Wash hands well each day,
To keep germs away,
Scrub with soap and water,
And be on your way!

If You're Happy and You Know It, Scrub Your Hands

(sung to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It")

If you're happy and you know it, scrub your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, scrub your hands.
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, scrub your hands.

If you're happy and you know it, rinse them off.
If you're happy and you know it, rinse them off.
If you're happy and you know it, then your face will surely show it.
If you're happy and you know it, rinse them off.
CHA CHA CHA!!!

Demonstrate hand washing

- Squirt some alcohol-based hand rub or unscented hand lotion into your palm. Remind the children that you are using the alcohol-based hand rub or lotion as "pretend" soap.
- Show the children how to "wash" their hands the right way using the alcohol-based hand rub or lotion. Sing one of the songs as you pretend to wash and rinse. Make sure to wash the tops, palms, in between the fingers, and under your nails as you demonstrate good hand washing.

Practice hand washing

- Squirt a small amount of alcohol-based hand rub into each child's hand. For large groups, have two or three students show the others how to wash their hands.
- Ask children to pretend they are at a sink with soap and warm running water.
- Ask children to sing the song as they pretend to wash their hands with the alcohol-based hand rub.
- During daily restroom breaks and hand washing routines, encourage the children to practice hand washing with soap and water while singing one of the hand washing songs.

Coloring/cutting activities

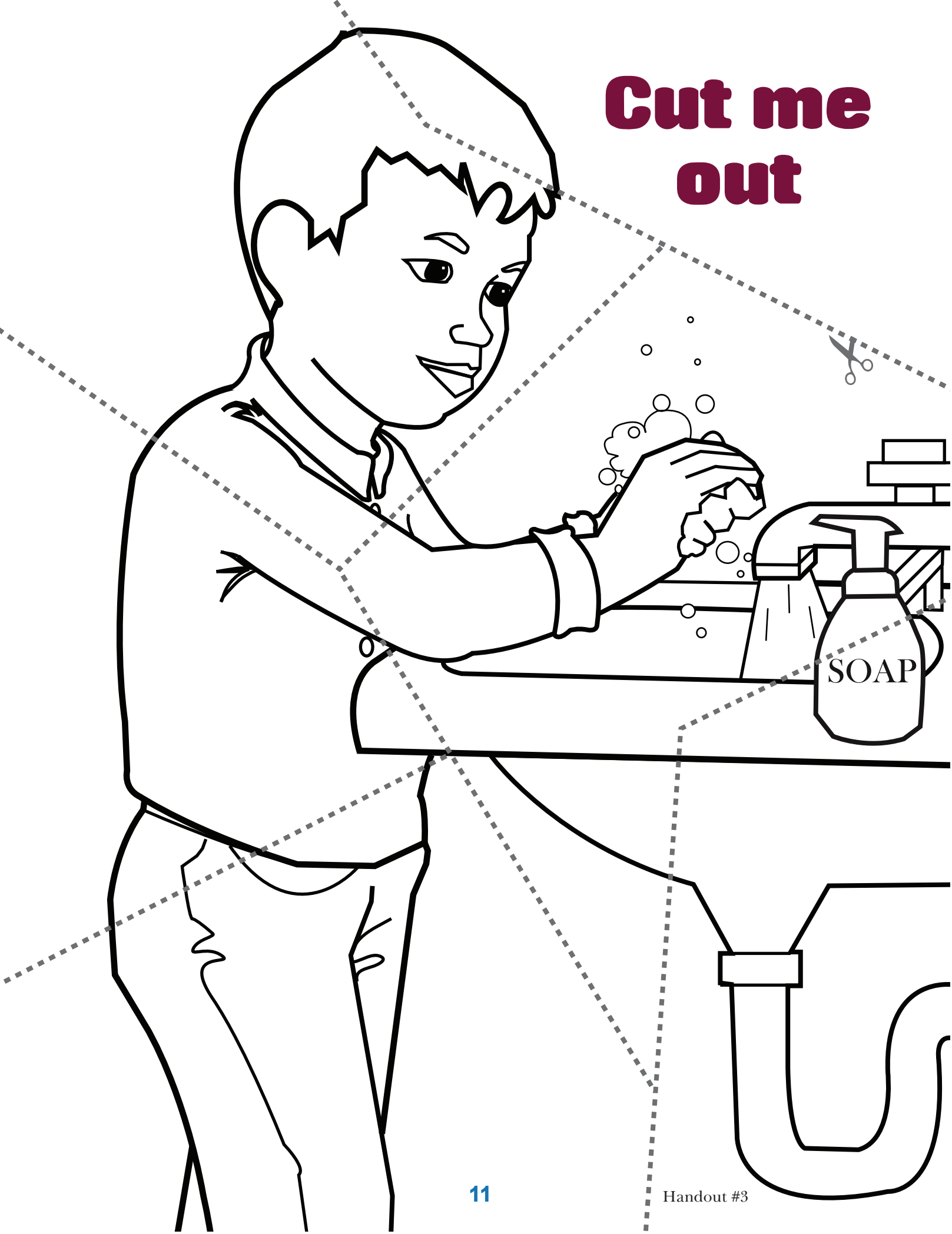
After explaining the importance of hand washing, offer handouts based on the skill level of the children in your facility. Offer children:

- **Handouts #1** and **#2** to color.
- **Handouts #3** and **#4** to color and cut. Then have children cut out the puzzle and paste it back together on a piece of construction paper.
- **Handout #5** to connect the dots and color.
- **Handout #6** to color. Display these hand washing pledges on the wall to reinforce good hygiene.

Color Me

Color Me

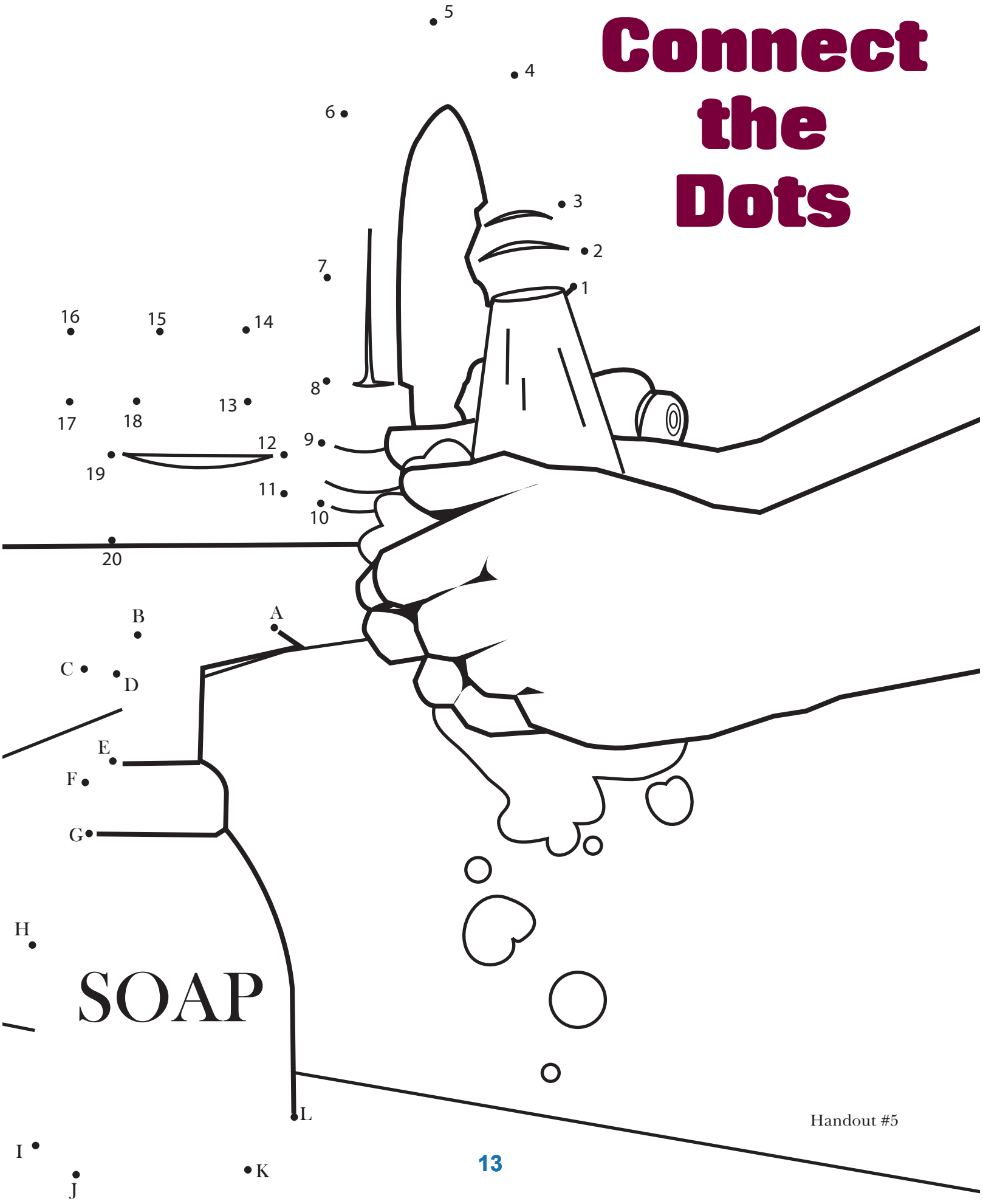
Cut me out



Cut me out

Handout #4

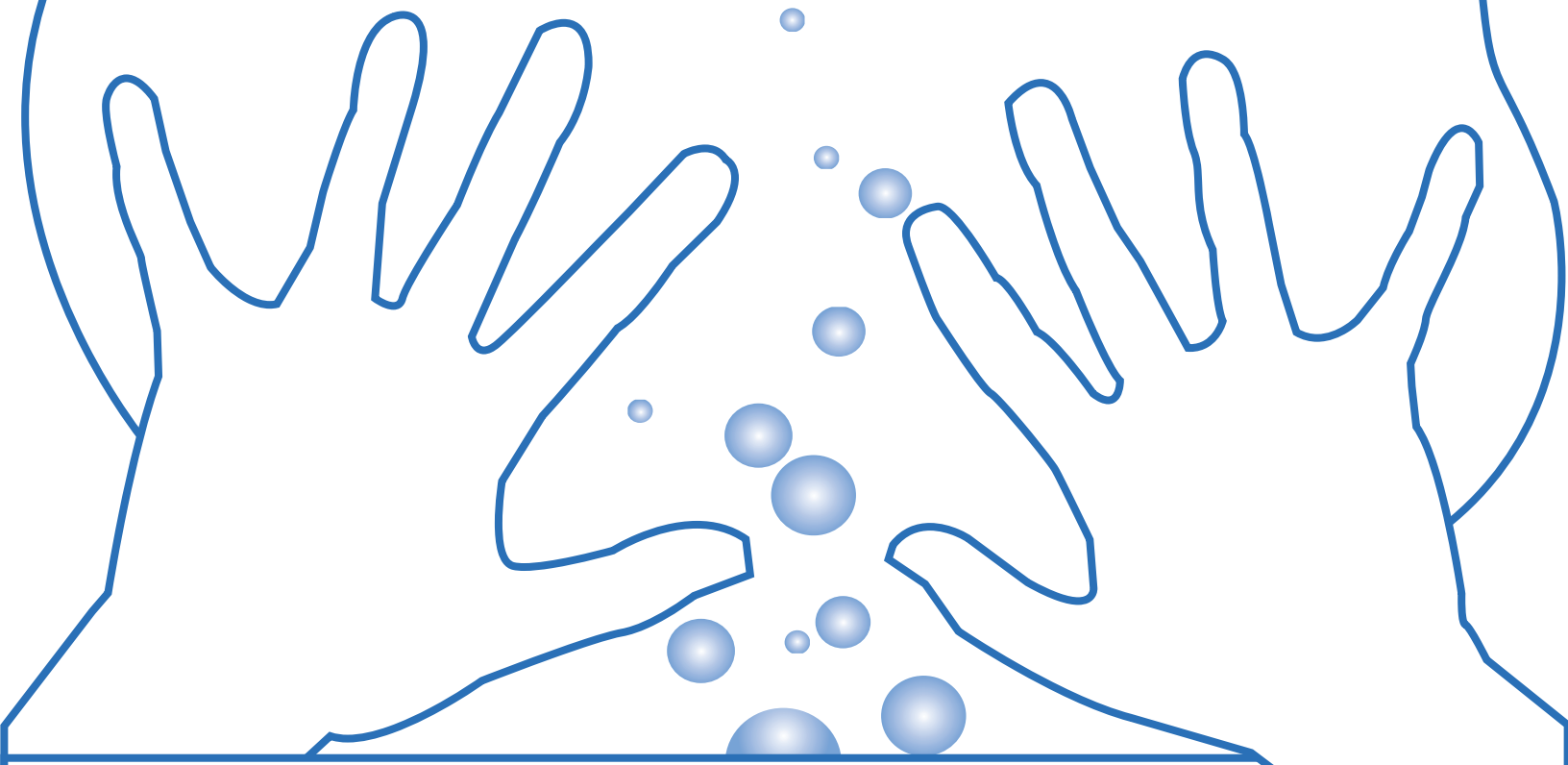
Connect the Dots



Handout #5

My Pledge

I pledge to cover my mouth and nose when I cough or sneeze.
I pledge to wash my hands in a sink.



My Name: .....

2

Cover Your Cough and Sneeze Lesson Plan Children Ages 3 to 7

Lesson 2

Read the background information for all lessons on page 2 of this guide. You may want to go over once again how germs spread and about the flu.

Reasons for this lesson:

- To teach children correct coughing and sneezing etiquette
- To teach children that covering their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze can lower the risk of spreading flu germs that make other people sick

Time:

- 10 minutes for circle time
- 15 minutes for completing the handouts

Supplies:

- Tissues to glue to the handout
- Construction paper to trace their hand
- Scissors
- Glue
- **Handouts #7** and **#8**

Activities:

- Circle time—teaching and singing
- Cover cough handout—tracing, cutting, coloring

Lesson 2:

Circle time and singing

- Ask children to sit in a circle. Teach the children general information on how to cover their mouth and nose when they cough or sneeze. Let students know that when they don't have a tissue, they can cough into their sleeve (teacher shows). Or they can cover their mouth and nose with their hands, and then wash their hands. Teach children not to wipe their nose on their sleeve.
- Explain that we cover our mouth and nose because little drops of moisture (droplets) come out when we cough or sneeze, and they have germs in them. Germs can make the people around us sick if we are sick. Explain that the flu passes from person to person through the coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with the flu.
- Finally, teach the cough/sneeze song below. Then hand a tissue to each child. Ask children to place the tissue in front of their mouth and nose when the song tells them to—but not really cough. Ask them to throw their tissues away after the activity and wash their hands.

We Need to Cover Our Cough

(sung to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

We need to cover our cough. We need to cover our cough.
Hi ho the deri-o, we need to cover our cough.

We need to cover our sneeze. We need to cover our sneeze.
Hi ho the deri-o, we need to cover our sneeze.

We need to use tissue. We need to use tissue.
Hi ho the deri-o, we need to use tissue.

We need to toss it out. We need to toss it out.
Hi ho the deri-o, we need to toss it out.

We need to wash our hands. We need to wash our hands.
Hi ho the deri-o, we need to wash our hands.

(Say together:) No tissue? I'll cough or sneeze in my sleeve!

Ask children these questions about hand washing and cough etiquette when you present Lesson 2 to children ages 3 to 7.

Question: Why is it important to use soap and running water when you wash your hands?

Answer: To make sure the dirt and germs go away.

Question: Why is it important to get the germs off your hands?

Answer: So you don't get sick or make others around you sick.

Question: How long should you rub your hands together?

Answer: Rub your hands together for 20 seconds—long enough to sing the "Happy Hand Washing" song twice or our version of "If You're Happy and You Know It."

Question: How are germs (like viruses) passed?

Answer: Germs are passed when you cough or sneeze into your hands and touch other objects, or when you don't cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Question: How can we keep from spreading our germs to other people and making them sick?

Answer: Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough using a tissue. Then throw the tissue away. When there is no tissue, cough or sneeze into your shoulder or elbow. If you cough or sneeze into your hands, wash them the right way. Germs get on your hands and then on other objects (doorknobs, toys, desks, etc.). Wash your hands the right way for 20 or more seconds.

Offer handouts to children

Ask children to choose **Handout #7** or **#8**. Have them trace their hand on a piece of construction paper and cut it out. Ask children to color the picture. Next glue the tissue to the mouth and nose on the picture. Then glue the cut out hand on the tissue.

- Younger children may be content with coloring the handouts or may need some help from you with cutting and gluing.

Lesson Plans and Activities for Children Ages 8 to 10 in Before and After School Care

You will find Lesson 3 in this section.

3

How Germs Spread Lesson Plan for Children Ages 8 to 10

Lesson 3

This lesson plan for children ages 8 to 10 teaches how germs spread and correct hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette. Read the background information for all lessons on page 2 of this guide. Teach the children about how germs spread and about the flu. Post the children's pledges (**Handout #11**) to reinforce good hygiene.

Reasons for this lesson:

- To show how germs spread
- To teach children the right way to wash their hands

Time:

- 15 to 20 minutes

Supplies:

- Glitter
- Unscented hand lotion
- Bucket or trash can
- Soap
- Water
- **Handouts #9** (Word Search), **#10** (Word Scramble) and **#11** (My Pledge)

Activities:

- Circle time—teaching, glitter activity, discussion
- Coloring

The Lesson:

Circle time:

Ask children to sit in a circle. Teach children general information about germs. Teach correct hand washing techniques using actual soap and water. Instruct children to hum or sing the "Happy Hand Washing" song twice or count slowly to 20.

Teach correct cough and sneeze etiquette. This means to sneeze or cough into a tissue or their sleeve, then toss out the tissue.

Glitter activity:

- Ask for a volunteer. Put a drop of unscented lotion the child's hands. Ask the child to rub his or her hands together to spread the lotion evenly. Have the child place his or her hands over a bucket or trash can. Place a pinch of glitter in the palm of one hand.
- Ask the child to make a fist (over the bucket or trash can). Then ask the child to spread their fingers out. Say, "What do you notice?"
- Ask the child with glitter to rub his or her hands together and then touch another child's hand.
- Ask both children to wipe their hands clean with a paper towel in front of the group. Ask, "What do you notice?"
- Ask both children to wash their hands with soap and water. Ask, "Did all the glitter come off?"

Discussion:

Lead a discussion about what happened. The children should have noticed that the glitter spread from hand to hand and to the other child. The paper towel did not remove all the glitter, but hand washing the right way should have.

Of course, real germs are so small that they can be seen only with a microscope. However, explain that germs are like glitter—there are a lot of them, they spread easily, and it takes proper hand washing to get rid of them. Explain that it is important to wash hands the right way to get rid of germs and to lower the chance of getting sick or making someone else sick.

Use these questions about hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette when you present Lesson 3 to children ages 8 to 10.

Question: How are germs (like viruses) passed?

Answer: Germs are passed when you cough or sneeze into your hands and touch other objects, or when you don't cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Question: How can we keep from spreading our germs to other people and making them sick?

Answer: Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough using a tissue. Then throw the tissue away. When there is no tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve. If you cough or sneeze into your hands, wash them the right way. Germs get on your hands and then on other objects (doorknobs, toys, desks, etc.). Wash your hands the right way for 20 or more seconds.

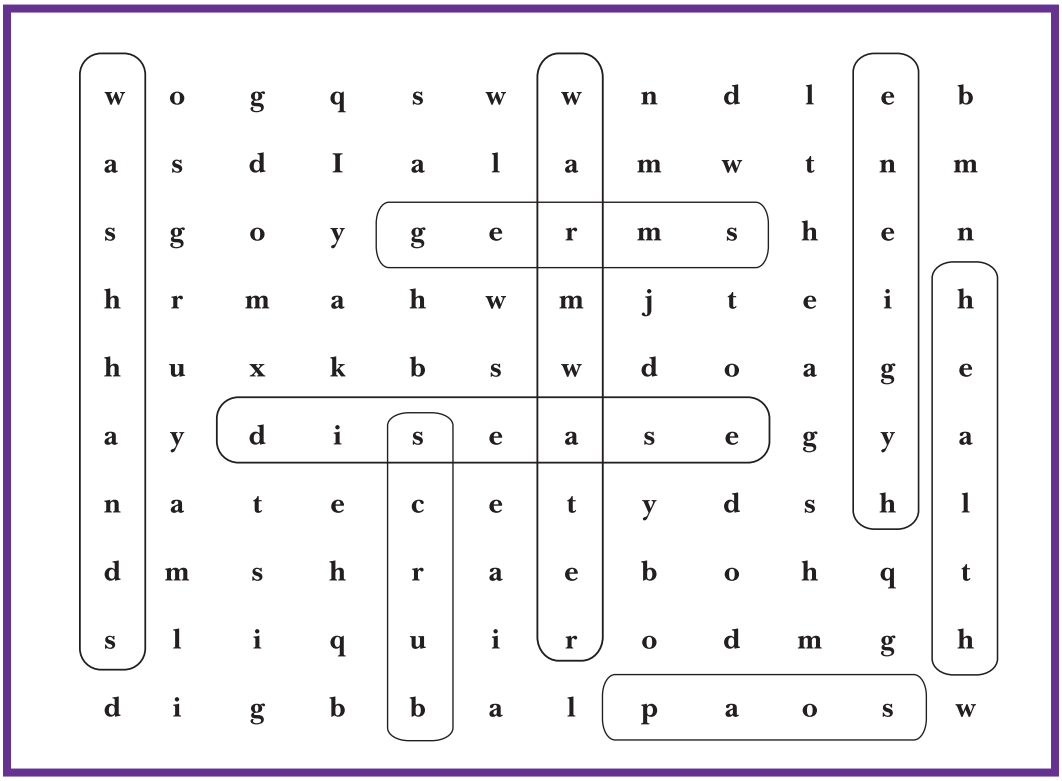
Question: How long should you rub your hands together?

Answer: You should rub your hands together for 20 seconds—long enough to count slowly to 20 or to sing the "Happy Hand Washing" song twice.

Activities for children ages 8 to 10:

- Offer children **Handout #9** (Word Search).
- Offer children **Handout #10** (Word Scramble).
- Ask children to sign **Handout #11** (the My Pledge page). Post signed pledges on the wall to reinforce good hygiene.

Teacher Answer Key: Word Search



w	o	g	q	s	w	w	n	d	l	e	b
a	s	d	I	a	l	a	m	w	t	n	m
s	g	o	y	g	e	r	m	s	h	e	n
h	r	m	a	h	w	m	j	t	e	i	h
h	u	x	k	b	s	w	d	o	a	g	e
a	y	d	i	s	e	a	s	e	g	y	a
n	a	t	e	c	e	t	y	d	s	h	l
d	m	s	h	r	a	e	b	o	h	q	t
s	l	i	q	u	i	r	o	d	m	g	h
d	i	g	b	b	a	l	p	a	o	s	w

Teacher Answer Key: Hand Washing Word Scramble

1. mgser	These are what make you sick.	germs
2. svuri	This is one type of germ.	virus
3. dsnha	What you should always wash.	hands
4. gnnirun trwae	What you wash your hands with.	running water
5.diquli sapo	Helps to get rid of germs.	liquid soap
6. seaidse	What germs can cause.	disease
7. cibaeatr	This is another type of germ.	bacteria
8. lehahyt	Washing your hands can keep you	healthy !

Hand Washing Word Search

Find and circle the eight words in the puzzle below.

hygiene	soap
warm water	germs
wash hands	health
disease	scrub

w	o	g	q	s	w	w	n	d	l	e	b
a	s	d	I	a	l	a	m	w	t	n	m
s	g	o	y	g	e	r	m	s	h	e	n
h	r	m	a	h	w	m	j	t	e	i	h
h	u	x	k	b	s	w	d	o	a	g	e
a	y	d	i	s	e	a	s	e	g	y	a
n	a	t	e	c	e	t	y	d	s	h	l
d	m	s	h	r	a	e	b	o	h	q	t
s	l	i	q	u	i	r	o	d	m	g	h
d	i	g	b	b	a	l	p	a	o	s	w

Hand Washing Word Scramble

Unscramble the words below. See if you can do this handout without using the hints.

	Hint:	Answer:
1. mgser	These are what make you sick.	_____
2. svuri	This is one type of germ.	_____
3. dsnha	What you should always wash.	_____
4. gnnirun trwae	What you wash your hands with.	_____
5.diquli sapo	Helps to get rid of germs.	_____
6. seaidse	What germs can cause.	_____
7. cibaeatr	This is another type of germ.	_____
8. lehahyt	Washing your hands can keep you _____!	

My Pledge

I ..... pledge to cover my mouth and nose when I cough or sneeze. I pledge to wash my hands.

- **Cough into your sleeve**

- **Cover your cough**

- **Wash your hands**

Posters and Handouts

You will find posters to hang in your facility in this section. You will also find handouts to give to parents.

To Post in Your Facility:

- **Good Habits** poster to display for the children 29
- **Cover Your Cough** poster for your office, staff lunch area, or staff bathroom 30
- **Did You Get Your Flu Vaccine Yet?** poster for staff and parents to see 31

To Give to Parents:

- **Help Your Child Be a Germ Stopper** 32
- **5 Steps to Good Hand Washing** 33

Good Habits

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!

Cover your cough

Wash your hands

Talk to your doctor about getting the seasonal flu vaccine

Did you know:

People who work with children have a greater chance of getting

Getting a flu vaccine lowers your chance of catching the flu this season. Talk to your doctor today about getting a flu vaccine.

Help Your Child Be a Germ Stopper!

How germs spread

People catch the flu by:

People who have the flu usually cough, sneeze, and have a runny nose. This makes droplets with virus in them. Other people can get the flu by breathing in these droplets or getting them in their nose or mouth. You can also get the flu by touching a hard surface such as a desk, doorknob, phone, or toy that has germs on it from a cough or sneeze and then touching your eyes, mouth, or nose before you wash your hands. We know that some viruses and bacteria (germs) can live for 2 or more hours on these hard surfaces.

What can you do to stop the spread of germs? Take these 3 simple steps today!

Step 1: Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Teach your children to do the same.

How? Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away.

No tissue? Cough or sneeze into:

- Your sleeve (elbow) or shirt (shoulder)

Step 2: Clean your hands often. Teach your children to do the same

Wash your hands with **soap** and warm water. Do it for 20 seconds.

How long is 20 seconds?

- Count slowly to 20. Or wash long enough to sing the "Happy Hand Washing" song twice or our special version of "If You're Happy and You Know It."

No soap around?

- Use hand gel or hand wipes.

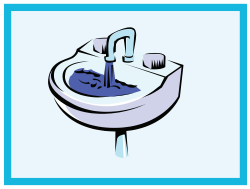
Step 3: Remind your children to use good hygiene.

Follow up with your children to make sure they follow the rules of good hygiene:

- Set a good example.
- Praise children when they practice these ways to stop germs in their tracks.

5 Steps to Good Hand Washing!

Do you know the right way to wash your hands?
Take these 5 simple steps to good hygiene.



Step 1 – Turn on the warm water and let it run.

Turn on the warm water. If you have 2 faucets, turn on the cold first and then the hot until the water is warm.

Step 2 – Wet your hands and soap up.

Get your hands wet by quickly running both hands under the warm water.

Turn one palm up flat under the soap nozzle and pump out some soap with your other hand. Or wet the bar of soap. Then rub the soap between your palms to make bubbles.

Rub your palms, the back of your hands, in between your fingers, and under your nails. Quickly dip your hands under the running water to make more bubbles and suds.

Step 3 – Sing while you wash!

Lather up for at least 20 seconds. Sing the "Happy Hand Washing" song twice, the alphabet song, or the version of "If You're Happy and You Know It" in this guide. The 20 seconds will seem to fly by!

Step 4 – Rinse off your hands.

Point your hands down into the sink so that the soap runs from your wrists to your fingertips. Make sure all the soap comes off.

Step 5 – Dry off your hands.

Grab the paper towel and dry your hands. Then use the paper towel to turn off the faucet, and throw the paper away. At home, you can use a cloth towel and use bare hands to turn off the faucet.