

When to Wash...

There are many times throughout the day when children and staff must wash their hands.

After:

- Arriving at the child care
- Using the restroom
- Helping a child with toileting
- Changing diapers
- Sneezing, coughing, or wiping a runny nose
- Eating or smoking
- Playing outside
- Cleaning or using chemicals
- Handling raw meat, poultry, or fish
- Giving medication
- Contact with blood or body fluids
- Touching animals or cleaning their environment
- Assisting a sick child
- Taking out the garbage

Before:

- Preparing or serving food
- Eating
- Setting the table
- Giving medication
- Touching eyes, nose, or mouth
- Administering first aid (if possible)

Bottom Line:

***Wash your hands
whenever
they are dirty!***

The Communicable Disease Outreach program staff offers consultations and STARS training to child care providers in Snohomish County. We encourage child care providers to take advantage of these services to improve the health and safety of children in their care.



How to stop germs in their tracks

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Wash Your Hands!

Washing hands thoroughly and often is critical to preventing the spread of illnesses in child care settings. Bacteria, viruses, and parasites can easily hitch a ride on hands and surfaces and be passed from one person to another. Germs cannot be seen. Hands may look clean and carry many germs.

The best thing to use for handwashing is **soap and water**. Use a liquid soap for child care settings. Antibacterial soaps are not necessary; lotion soap may be helpful in preventing hands from getting too dry. Dry hands with paper towels or clean cloth towels used only once. Follow the six steps to handwashing:



Other helpful hints:

- Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Post handwashing reminders at sinks.
- Water temperature should be between 85° and 120°F.
- A nail brush can help get germs out from under fingernails.



Teach Children to Wash

By teaching children how to wash their hands, they are learning a healthy habit that will benefit them the rest of their lives. Start young. Hold babies up to the sink and wash their hands with yours. They can begin connecting the act of washing their hands with toileting when you wash their hands in the sink after each diaper change.

Snohomish Health District recommends that child cares teach a lesson on germs and handwashing with children at least once a year. The Communicable Disease Outreach program has Glo-Germ kits that can be used with preschool age children and older.

Other ideas for teaching children:

- Use Vaseline or cooking oil and a little bit of glitter on their hands to teach them what it takes to get germs off: soap, warm water, and scrubbing.
- Have the children sing while washing to help them learn to wash long enough. Twice through the Happy Birthday song works well.
- Blow bubbles and then talk about how making plenty of bubbles is important to getting germs off of hands.
- Read a book about germs.

Instant Hand Sanitizers

Instant hand sanitizers are gels or wipes that can significantly reduce the number of germs on hands. The main ingredient in most products is either alcohol or benzalkonium chloride.



Instant hand sanitizers do not remove dirt or chemicals from hands and should not be used when hands are visibly soiled. They cannot cut through greases or oils that may be present on the hands.

For these reasons, they are not recommended for routine use in child care settings and should not be used on young children. They may, however, be useful on field trips or outside when soap and water are not available.

Gloves

Gloves can provide an added layer of protection between hands and a source of germs. They are most often used in child cares when changing diapers, preparing or serving food, and performing first aid.

Remember that gloves **do not** take the place of handwashing. Hands must still be washed after diapering or first aid is completed. Hands must also be washed before putting on gloves for food preparation.

