

# Infection Prevention: Hand Washing

Hand washing is one of the best ways to fight off infection. Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, especially before and after you eat and after you go the bathroom.

Try it now. Step 1. Wet your hands thoroughly with warm, running water. Step 2. Apply soap.

Step 3. To lather, rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds, palm to palm and then rub the back of each hand. Interlace your fingers and rub them together making sure the soap gets to all surfaces. Don't forget your thumbs and underneath your fingernails.

Step 4. Rinse your hands with warm, running water, getting all the soap off your hands. Step 5. Dry your hands thoroughly with a single-use towel.

Let's try that again. Wet your hands with warm, running water. Apply soap. Lather by rubbing your palms together for 20 seconds, then the backs of hands, between your fingers, your thumbs, and fingernails. Rinse off your hands with warm, running water. Dry your hands off with a single-use towel.

Washing your hands often helps prevent the spread of germs and keeps you, your family, and your community healthy. For more information about hand washing, visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).