



Hand Washing

Frequent and thorough hand washing is the most important way to prevent the spread of infection.

Why?

Washing your hands removes visible dirt and reduces the number of germs on your hands. This makes it less likely that germs will be spread from your hands to food, wounds and other things that you touch.

When?

- After sneezing and coughing.
- After using the toilet.
- Before and after meals and breaks.
- Before and after preparing food.
- Before and after smoking.
- When arriving home and before and after work.

With What?

- Soap.
- Warm running water.

How?

- Wet hands under warm running water. This helps to make the soap work better.
- Scrub hands all over for at least a count of 10. More time may be necessary if the hands are visibly soiled. Pay special attention to fingertips, thumbs and in between fingers.
- Rinse under warm, running water for at least a count of 10, holding the hands downward.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a paper towel. At home, try to use individual towels and wash towels regularly.
- Turn the taps off with the towel.

If the water is not safe for drinking because of germs (bacteria, viruses or parasites), it won't remove germs when hand washing. Wash with soap and water to remove the visible dirt; then use a hand disinfectant to reduce the number of germs on your hands. Hand disinfectants are alcohol-based rubs, gels, rinses or wipes that are used to kill germs living on your hands. They must contain at least 60% alcohol for them to be effective. The alcohol in the hand disinfectant completely evaporates in about 15 seconds.



For more information, please contact a member of Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit's Communicable Disease Team.



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