

Wash Your Hands: The Right Way

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), washing your hands with soap and water is the best way to prevent infection. Here's how to do it correctly:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 15 to 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to a friend.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- Always use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast-acting.

A Hands-Free Environment

Another CDC report noted that after using a public restroom, a person's hand can host as many as 200 million bacteria! In restrooms, germs tend to concentrate in damp areas and on door handles.

Conventional faucet handles in older public washrooms also house germs, so touching the handle, even after washing, re-contaminates the just-cleaned hands. The problem multiplies when students use manual cloth or paper towel dispensers, or even air blowers that require a button to be pressed. When all those steps are combined, there go most of the hygienic benefits of hand washing.

That's one reason hands-free, sensor-activated faucets, hand dryers, fixtures and other accessories have come into widespread use in public facilities. (Another reason: They conserve water and help reduce utilities costs.)

Maze-like open entrances, which afford privacy and eliminate the need to push door plates to enter and pull door handles to exit are another design feature that eliminates germ exposure.