

Safe Human Waste Practices

Toilets come in all shapes and sizes; some may just be a hole in the ground. Regardless of what type we use, it's important to keep ourselves clean when using the toilet. If we don't, we might get sick. Our goal as leaders is to help families learn about and follow safe human waste practices.

KEY POINTS

- **Unclean practices when using the toilet can cause illness.** They can spread bacteria, parasites, and viruses that cause diarrhea and other diseases. Diarrhea can cause loss of body fluids, severe dehydration, and, in some cases, death. Recurring diarrhea can reduce a child's growth and brain development, making them vulnerable to other diseases.
- **When possible, use toilets and latrines.** This helps keep us clean. It also helps keep feces (poop) out of our drinking water supplies. Toilets and latrines should be cleaned regularly.
- **Following proper handwashing guidelines reduces the spread of disease.** After using a toilet or latrine, we should wash our hands with soap and clean water or hand sanitizer. Parents should wash their hands after helping their children use the toilet or cleaning their children's bottoms.
- **If no toilet or latrine is available,** defecate (poop) at least 30 meters away from any source of water, bury the feces, and wash your hands with soap and clean water or hand sanitizer.



Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- In my area, which families might be affected by unsafe human waste practices? Is this a widespread problem?
- What are the best ways to teach members about the importance of safe human waste practices?
- Do women and girls have appropriate access to supplies to manage menstruation?
- What government, nonprofit, and Church resources are available to help improve human waste practices and feminine hygiene?



Inspiration from Church Leaders

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: *“Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord” (D&C 133:5). Thus has [the Lord] spoken to us in modern revelation. Be clean in body. Be clean in mind. Be clean in language. Be clean in dress and manner” (“Be Ye Clean,” Ensign, May 1996, 48).*

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Consider these ideas and others as you counsel together and pray for guidance.

Leaders

- **Address immediate needs and look for long-term solutions.** If a family is affected by unsafe human waste practices or does not have access to clean water, consider how to help with immediate needs. Then work with them to find long-term solutions.
- **Teach members safe human waste practices.** For example, you could hold a Relief Society, quorum, or class activity where you share practical methods for staying clean when using a toilet or latrine.
- **Mothers and Relief Society members can help young women** learn to manage their periods at school and home in safe and healthy ways.
- **Develop safe human waste practices in your area.** Work with community leaders to develop sanitary toilets and latrines. Let families know about these resources.

Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Learn and share safe human waste practices.
- If a home shows signs of unsafe human waste practices, counsel with the family about ways to improve their situation. Be understanding and not judgmental. Listen to understand the challenges the parents may be facing.
- If needed, counsel with the Relief Society or elders quorum about ways you can help.

Safe Human Waste Practices Handout

Share this handout with members of your stake and ward. It provides useful information and suggestions for families.

Safe Human Waste Practices

Toilets come in all shapes and sizes. No matter what type of toilet you use, these practices will help your family avoid illnesses related to unsafe human waste disposal.

- FLUSH TOILET**
 1. Try not to touch extra surfaces.
 2. Sit on the toilet like a chair.
 3. Use toilet paper to wipe yourself clean.
 4. If possible, put the toilet paper in the toilet. Otherwise put it in the trash.
 5. Always flush the toilet.
 6. Throw away trash.
 7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.
- SQUAT TOILET**
 1. Bunch your clothes around your knees.
 2. Squat above the toilet without touching it.
 3. Use toilet paper to wipe yourself clean.
 4. If possible, put the toilet paper in the toilet. Otherwise put it in the trash.
 5. If possible, flush the toilet.
 6. Throw away trash.
 7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.
- OPEN OR NO TOILET**
 1. Pick a site far from people, houses, and water.
 2. Dig a hole 15 cm deep.
 3. Squat over the hole.
 4. Use toilet paper or soft leaves to wipe yourself clean.
 5. Place paper or leaves in the hole. Fill with dirt, mud, and rocks.
 6. Make sure there are no traces of waste.
 7. Wash your hands with soap for 20 seconds.



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Learn more about safe human waste practices and other ways to improve child nutrition: ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org

