

# Handwashing

*Keeping yourself and your family healthy is crucial, and preventing infections is key to achieving that goal. Proper handwashing with soap can help reduce germs on the hands, which can help prevent infections. As leaders and ministering brothers and sisters, our goal is to teach families how to wash their hands properly and support their efforts to do so.*

## KEY POINTS

**Although we cannot see them, germs can be everywhere, and under certain conditions, they can cause diseases.**

Proper handwashing reduces the spread of germs and diseases, including those that produce diarrhea, hand and mouth disease, colds, and so forth, and that can affect a child's nutritional health.

**Proper handwashing before and after certain activities is vital.**

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before and after handling raw meat.
- Before eating.
- After cleaning.
- After using the bathroom or defecating.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After playing or swimming.
- Whenever your hands are dirty.

**Washing hands properly can help reduce the spread of infectious diseases.**

Use these steps to teach families how to wash their hands.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to wash the front and back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
4. Rinse all the soap off with clean water.
5. Air-dry your hands or use a clean towel.

If clean water and soap are not available, try to use hand sanitizer. Cover hands with the sanitizer and rub together briskly until it dries.

Consider that wiping your hands with unclean objects, including your own clothes, could contaminate your hands again.

See the one-page document for families called "Handwashing" for more information.



# Questions to Prayerfully Consider

- How common is hand-washing in my area?
- What resources do families in my area have to promote handwashing?
- How can I better support handwashing practices?



## Inspiration from the Scriptures

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).*

## THINGS WE CAN DO

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

### Leaders

#### Teach members how to properly wash their hands. For example:

- Organize personal hygiene and handwashing workshops. Consider including pictures and demonstrations. Participants could practice the motions of proper handwashing.
- Consider teaching handwashing with a brief demonstration that could be added to a Primary activity or other appropriate meetings.
- Make up a rhyme or song for children that mentions all the steps of handwashing.

### Ministering Brothers and Sisters

- Teach handwashing practices while visiting families.
- Consider if families have access to clean water and supplies for washing hands.
- Discuss these needs with the Relief Society or elders quorum president.

### Handwashing Handout

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

### Handwashing

*Proper handwashing helps reduce the spread of diseases.*

**WASH HANDS:**

- Before, during, and after preparing food.
- Before eating food.
- After using the toilet or evacuating waste.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After playing or swimming.

- 1 WET**
  - Wet hands with clean, running water.
- 2 SOAP**
  - Apply soap.
- 3 RUB**
  - Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
  - Make sure to rub soap on the front and back of your hands, between fingers, and under nails. (Count or sing a children's song)
- 4 RINSE**
  - Rinse all the soap off with clean water.
- 5 DRY**
  - Air dry hands or use a clean towel.

If clean water and soap are not available, try to use hand sanitizer. Cover hands and rub together briskly until it dries.



THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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Learn more about handwashing and other ways to improve child nutrition: [ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ChildNutrition.ChurchofJesusChrist.org)

