

## Why is washing your hands important?

The most common way germs are spread is by people's hands.

Germs are often harmless but they can also cause illnesses such as colds and tummy bugs, as well as more serious illnesses such as E. coli and flu.

Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to help to reduce the spread of infections. Washing your hands properly with soap and warm water can help protect you, your family, children and others.

## When should I wash my hands?

You should make regular and thorough hand washing part of your daily routine, especially:

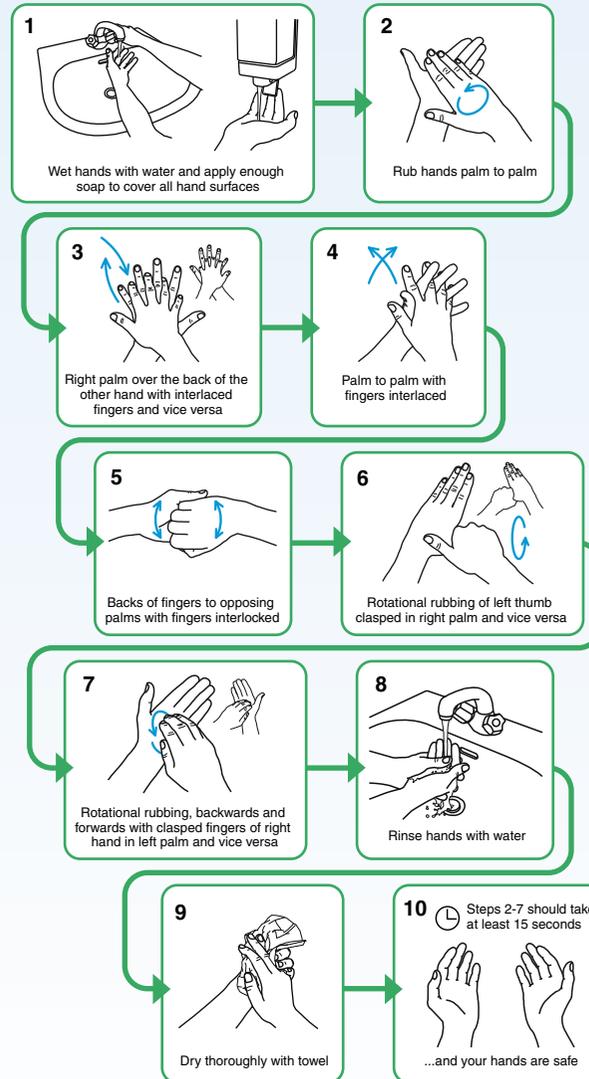
- Before eating or handling food
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching animals or animal waste
- After handling rubbish
- After changing a nappy
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- Before and after visiting a hospital ward (remember alcohol based hand rubs are also provided)

Don't forget – encourage children to wash their hands at these times too.

## How do I wash my hands properly?

It takes at least fifteen seconds to wash your hands properly – this is about how long it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday to You' twice through!

Encourage children to wash their hands by showing them how to do it, and by setting them a good example.



Source: World Health Organization



## What else can I do to help prevent the spread of infection?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable single-use tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping and blowing noses
- Dispose of used tissues in the nearest waste bin
- Wash your hands with soap and water after coughing, sneezing or using tissues