



BRUMMANA HIGH SCHOOL

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

Handwashing

Why handwashing is important?



Handwashing is an easy, lifelong, healthy habit and one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of respiratory infections such as cold, the flu or COVID-19 and diarrheal infections and one of the best ways to protect yourself and others from getting sick.

Handwashing

How do I wash my hands?

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel.

How To Wash Your Hands



Wet your hands with water



Apply soap



Rub palm to palm



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



Rub back of each hand with the palm of the other



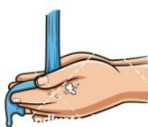
Rub each thumb using a rotational movement



Circularly rub the tips of your fingers in each palm



Rub each wrist with your other hand



Rinse both hands well with water



Dry your hands thoroughly with a towel

Do I really need to wash my hands for 20 seconds?

It may be possible that a person can get any virus by touching a frequently touched surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or possibly their eyes with unwashed hands. Scientific studies show that you need to scrub for 20 seconds to remove harmful germs and chemicals from your hands. If you wash for a shorter time, you will not remove as many germs.

How does handwashing with soap and water remove germs and chemicals?

Wetting your hands with clean water before applying soap helps you better than applying soap to dry hands. Scrubbing your hands for 20 seconds is important to this process because these actions physically destroy germs and remove germs and chemicals from your skin. When you rinse your hands, you wash the germs and chemicals down the drain.

Should I use a paper towel to turn off the faucet after washing my hands?

If you are concerned about getting germs on your hands after you wash them, you can use a paper towel, your elbow or another hands-free way to turn off the faucet.

Soap

Both bar and liquid soap work well to remove germs. Use plain soap in either bar or liquid form to wash your hands.

Is antibacterial soap better than plain soap?

Use plain soap and water to wash your hands. Studies have not found any added health benefit from using antibacterial soap, other than for professionals in healthcare settings. Antibacterial soaps are no better than plain soap at preventing people from getting sick and their ingredients may not be safe for long-term, daily use. Some studies have shown that using antibacterial soap may contribute to antibiotic resistance.



Water and Handwashing



Is it better to use warm water or cold water?

Use clean, running water and your preferred water temperature, cold or warm to wash your hands. Warm and cold water remove the same number of germs from your hands. Water itself does not usually kill germs; to kill germs, water would need to be hot enough to scald your hands.

What if I have water but no soap to wash my hands?

If you don't have soap and water, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If you don't have hand sanitizer or soap, but do have water, rub your hands together under the water and dry them with a clean towel. Rubbing your hands under water will rinse some germs from your hands, even though it's not as effective as washing with soap.

What if the water is dirty or contaminated?

Your hands can get germs on them if you place them in water that looks dirty or contaminated. Use clean, running water to wash your hands. If you don't have access to clean, running water, use hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol to get rid of germs.

Drying Hands



Why should I dry my hands?

Use a clean towel or paper towel to dry your hands after washing them. Germs spread more easily when hands are wet, so make sure to dry your hands completely, whatever method you use.

Should I reuse a towel to dry my hands at home?

Reusable towels are a practical option at home. They should be changed when visibly dirty and before they develop mildew from remaining damp.

Key Times to Wash

What are the key times to wash hands?

Some key times:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating
- **Before** touching your eyes, nose or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
- **After** touching garbage
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects
- **After** you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by others, such as door handles, tables etc.
- If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy



Hand Sanitizer and Wipes



Which is better, hand sanitizer or handwashing?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to remove all types of germs that hand sanitizers don't kill. Soap and water also remove harmful chemicals like pesticides and heavy metals. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol based sanitizers work by killing germs on your hands, while washing your hands with soap and water removes germs from your hands. Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

How do I apply the gel product?

- Apply the gel to the palm of one hand
- Rub your hands together
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

Do wipes remove germs?

Hand sanitizing wipes with at least 60% alcohol kill germs on your hands.

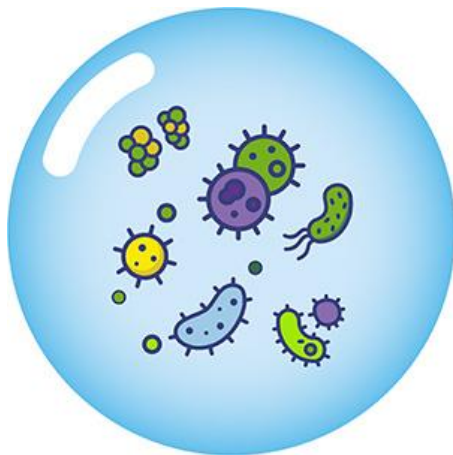
Baby wipes are not designed to remove germs from your hands, and it is not recommend using them to clean your hands. They may make your hands look clean, but baby wipes and similar products that do not have at least 60% alcohol do not reliably remove germs from your hands.

Disinfecting wipes are designed to kill germs on surfaces. Do not use disinfecting wipes to clean your skin because they may cause irritation. Always read and follow the directions on the label to use these products safely.

What if I have a hand sanitizer that has no alcohol?

Hand sanitizers without at least 60% alcohol don't consistently kill germs.

Hand Hygiene and Antibiotic Resistance



How does hand hygiene fight antibiotic resistance?

Hand hygiene helps stop the spread of germs, including ones that can cause antibiotic-resistant infections. Antibiotic resistance means the germs are not killed and continue to grow. Infections caused by antibiotic-resistant germs are sometimes impossible to treat. Keeping your hands clean by washing your hands with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer is one of the best ways to prevent germs from spreading and avoid infections.

Prepared by the BHS Medical Team

Source: CDC Centers of Disease control and Prevention