

Wash Your Hands, Save Lives



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Washing your hands properly and frequently keeps you healthy and is the best prevention against the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections.

Cleaning your hands with soap and water fights germs such as the novel coronavirus disease 2019, the COVID-19 and is considered the number one preventive measure to stop the spread of this global pandemic (Picture 1).

When your hands are not clean, germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects (this is why it is very important to cough with your arm and avoid shaking hands during the pandemic).
- Touch your eyes, mouth and nose.
- Touch a contaminated object or surface.
- Prepare or eat food and drinks.

How and When to Properly Wash Your Hands:

According to Johns Hopkins University: «Washing your hands properly with soap fights germs, like the coronavirus, by helping to dissolve the fatty, greasy outer envelope of the virus, which inactivates or kills it». So in order to kill the virus and save lives, follow these steps to clean your hands:

1. Turn on the tap with a paper towel and wet your hands with clean, warm running water.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with soap. Lather the backs, sides and palms of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails



Picture 1. Recommendations from French Health Authorities to protect yourself from COVID-19.

3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. Rinse your hands under clean, warm running water, using a rubbing motion.
5. Wipe and dry your hands gently with a paper towel or a clean towel, or air dry them (Drying your hands vigorously can damage the skin and increase the risk of infection).
6. Turn off the tap using a paper towel to avoid possible recontamination.

These steps represent the proper and recommended



technique to clean your hands but if water and soap aren't readily available, you can use a hand sanitizer that must contain alcohol at 60%. It is therefore useful to keep with you a hand gel (alcohol 60) during the pandemic.

Key Time to Wash Your Hands: To reduce the risk of contamination you should wash your hands :

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers

- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

During the COVID-19 pandemic, you should also wash your hands if you have been in a public place and touched objects and surfaces that may be frequently touched by other people (doorhandles, tables, shopping carts, etc.) Finally, make sure your hands are clean before touching your eyes, nose and mouth because that's how the virus enters our body.