



Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District  
**HEALTH UNIT**<sup>®</sup>  
Your Partner in Health

**FACT SHEET:**  
INFECTION  
CONTROL

# Hand Hygiene

For more information call the Health ACTION Line at 613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853  
or visit us on the web at: [www.healthunit.org](http://www.healthunit.org)

## Preventing illness: it's in your hands

Good hand hygiene is easy to learn and can reduce the spread of illnesses in both adults and children. There are two methods to hand hygiene:

### Hand Washing



Hand washing with soap and running water should be performed when hands are **visibly** dirty. (See below for the 6-step method.)

### Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

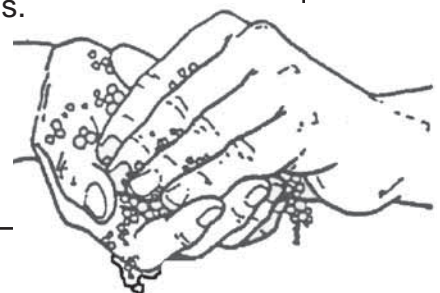
This is an excellent way to kill germs on the hands when they are **not** visibly soiled.

- Use a product that contains at least 70% alcohol.
- Ensure you clean between fingers, around the thumbs and under the nails.
- This should take at least 15 seconds. Rub hands until dry.

***Using good hand hygiene is the single most important thing you can do to reduce infections and help protect you and your family.***

### How should you properly wash your hands?

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Add soap, and then scrub hands together to make a soapy lather. Do this away from the water for **at least 15 seconds**.
3. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as in between fingers, around thumbs and under nails.
4. Rinse hands well, under warm running water.
5. Dry hands with a paper towel.
6. Turn off water using paper towel and dispose.



Continued on reverse...

# When should you perform hand hygiene?

## Before you:

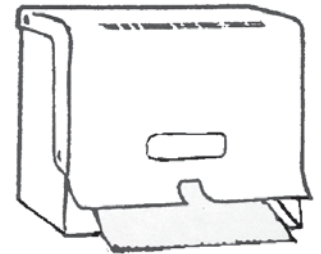
- Prepare or eat food
- Treat a cut or wound
- Look after someone who is sick
- Put in or take out contact lenses

## After you:

- Go to the bathroom
- Handle uncooked foods
- Change a diaper
- Blow your nose, cough or sneeze or wipe a child's nose
- Handle garbage
- Handle an animal and its waste
- Use the phone or computer
- Look after someone who is sick
- Shop at the supermarket
- Smoke cigarettes

## Teach the Kids

- Encourage children to wash hands before eating, after playing outdoors or playing with pets, after using the bathroom, and after blowing their noses.
- Show and help them to wash their hands in order to form good, lifelong habits.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are safe for children to use when supervised. The alcohol content disappears once the product dries.
- Always use a different cloth for each child when washing a group of children's hands.
- Always use disposable towels in a day care or school.
- Some suggest singing "Happy Birthday" or the ABCs to keep your child washing for the correct amount of time.



When completed properly,  
hand hygiene is your best defence  
against germs and getting sick!



Brockville .....	613-345-5685
Gananoque.....	613-382-4231
Kemptville.....	613-258-5941
Smiths Falls.....	613-283-2740

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