



Health Matters

A newsletter from the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit

WINTER 2006

<http://www.healthunit.org>



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National Peer Power Youth Leadership Network Registration Opens (Can)

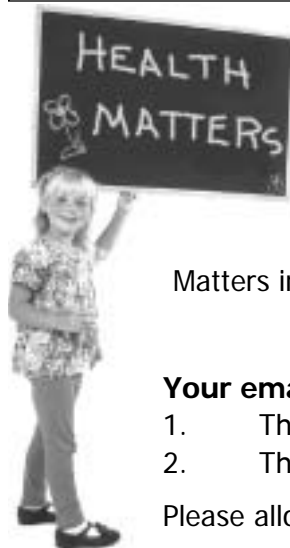
Submitted by Carol Quinlan, Public Health Nurse

Canada is once again looking for Canadian schools and community groups who would like to have their youth leaders between the ages of 13 and 18 become presenters to other Canadian youth, ages 8-12 during Bullying Awareness Week from November 13th to the 18th, 2006. Registration opens on Tuesday, January 3rd, 2006 and will close on Friday, June 3rd, 2006. Bullying.org Canada will provide registering schools with a free multimedia presentation for the Peer Power Youth Leaders to share with other Canadian youth. The research-based presentation lasts approximately 45 minutes and is appropriate for audiences of ages 8-12

years. Peer Power member schools will also join the National Peer Power Youth Leadership Network that includes hundreds of Canadian member-schools. The National Peer Power Youth Leadership Network will allow member schools to connect and share with one another across Canada.

Schools can find more information and register for the National Peer Power Youth Leadership Network by filling out the registration form on the "I Want to Help" section of the www.bullying.org web site.

From the Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa website bullying.org



Health Matters * NEW SERVICE * To help schools with parent newsletters.

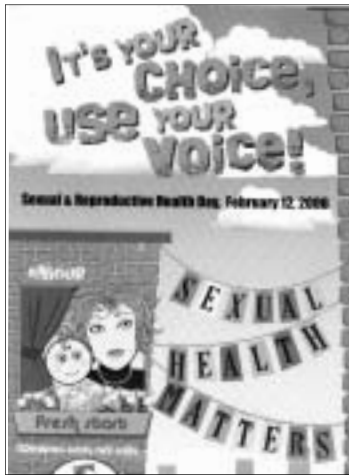
Would you like to use articles you find in Health Matters in your parent/school newsletters? If so please contact: dawn.foley@healthunit.org

Your email request to Dawn must include:

1. The Health Matters edition (example: Fall 2005)
2. The page number and title of the article.

Please allow 48 hours for an electronic delivery!

Sexual Health Matters!



Submitted by: Tammy Welk, Public Health Nurse

On February 12th, 2006 Canadians across the nation will be celebrating the **4th annual National Sexual and Reproductive Health Day**. The theme for this special day will be: "It's Your Choice, Use Your Voice". The focus will be on bringing up a "sexually healthy" generation, which includes opening up the dialogue on sexuality, keeping yourself informed about sexual health issues, and passing on your knowledge to others.

Together, we can create a sexually healthy new generation full of individuals and communities that are comfortable speaking about and expressing their sexuality.

For more information on sexual health contact your local Public Health Unit or call the Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853.

It's your choice - use your voice!

- Discuss sexuality and healthy decision making with your friends, family and co-workers
- Ask questions about sexual health issues
- Help friends and family seek out and find sexual health services
- Talk to your kids about sexuality, listen and answer their questions honestly
- Talk with a partner about sexual activity before it occurs
- Speak out against homophobia in your community
- Ask for specific health services and support in your community

Anaphylaxis resource kits to assist schools with Sabrina's Law

Submitted by: Carrie Kasurak, Public Health Nurse

Sabrina's Law became effective in Ontario on January 1, 2006. This legislation was established to protect anaphylactic students. After consultation with anaphylaxis and media experts across the province the **Ministry of Education** has developed a comprehensive, hands-on anaphylaxis resource kit (posters, literature, auto-injector trainers, and access to an online e-learning module). The kits are expected to be distributed to all schools in Ontario by February 2006.

Pregnancy and the workplace

Submitted by Denise Kall, R.N., B.N., Reproductive Health Program Leader



The majority of women now work outside the home. In Canada, women make up over 50% of the workforce and more than 90% of these women are in their prime childbearing years. Eight out of ten women will become pregnant during their working years. In the school setting, many female teachers will be pregnant at some time during their teaching years. Clearly this will have an impact for a large number of women, their families and their employers. In general, it is safe for most women to continue working during pregnancy, especially in a school environment. There are however, several things employees and their employers should consider to reduce risks to the pregnancy. **Certain types of work can cause a baby to be born too soon or too small.**

What can I do to increase my health and the health of my baby?

- Take responsibility to find out about the work environment
- Check for exposure to any of the items above
- Talk to your employer, your health & safety committee, your occupational health nurse and your health care provider about your work
- Continue to practice healthy lifestyle behaviours: eat well, exercise, do not smoke, drink alcohol or take drugs
- Wash your hands frequently: after working, after using the bathroom, and before eating
- Take regular rest breaks
- Modify work habits if necessary
- Talk with your employer about modified work or work reassignment if needed

This could include:

- Standing for long periods
- Hard physical work: lifting, pushing, pulling
- Long work hours or long work weeks
- Stressful work environment
- Excessive heat and noise
- Exposure to toxic substances such as lead, PCB's, solvents or toxic waste
- Exposure to infectious materials.

For Men Too:

Workplace hazards such as radiation, smoke, heat, or chemicals can cause damaged sperm or low sperm counts

Information and a supportive workplace can help a woman have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby, while continuing to be a productive worker.

For more information call the Health Action line at 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

Information adapted from the Best Start Resource Centre: www.beststart.org

Attention Grade 4/5 Teachers and Racing Enthusiasts!!
This year's *Racing Against Drugs* will be held
 from Tuesday May 30th to Thursday June 1st in Smiths Falls.



Registration forms will be faxed the **third week of February** to each school in the Tri-County area. Registrations will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. For more information please contact Julie Ingleby, Public Health Nurse at (613) 283-2740.

Active Learning at School

Submitted by: Shannon MacIntyre, Public Health Nurse

Daily Physical Activity (DPA) requires that students get a minimum of 20 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity every day. The Health Unit has several resources to help you meet your mandated DPA, through our WinterActive campaign, running until March, and our TV Turn Off Challenge, coming in April. There are many ways this can be worked into your school day; it just requires a little creativity and a healthy dose of fun!

Here is a list of activities that you can try with your students:

1. Relays _____

Have the students make a few rows lining up one behind the other, facing the front of the class. The person at the front of the line races to the front of the class, answers a question, then tags the next person in line, who's now at the front, and then proceeds to the back of the line. The second person does the same as the first, and the process continues to repeat itself using different questions. Play for 10-20 minutes, the line with the most correct answers wins. This can be played in several subjects and all age groups using appropriate questions.

2. Follow the leader _____

This game can be used to help teach geography. Have the students lead each other through different countries, naming the capitol cities, answering questions along the way, and acting out related activities to the region. E.g. Swim through British Columbia, climb through Alberta, bike through Saskatchewan, skate through Manitoba, snow shoe through Ontario, play hockey through Quebec, and row through the Maritimes.

3. Simon Says _____

With the teacher playing "Simon" ask the students to perform an activity while they answer a question. The teacher must say "Simon Says" before telling them what to do. If the teacher does not say "Simon says" prior to the command, and the student performs it, that student must go the perimeter of the class room and perform different activities such as jump rope, hop on one foot. The goal of the game is to be the last student standing. E.g. "Simon says do 2 x 2 push-ups", or "while touching your toes count to 10".

4. Paper Skate _____

Each student puts a piece of paper under each foot, and then slides around as if they were skating. This seems to work best on carpet. This is a good opportunity to re-use paper from the recycling bin.

5. Over Under _____

Line the students up in a row one behind the other. The first person in line passes an item (like a rubber chicken) overhead without turning around to the person behind them. That person passes the item between their legs to the person behind them without turning around, then the third person passes the item overhead, the fourth between their legs. This pattern is continued until the last person gets the item, and then he/she runs to the front and starts the process over. You can put a time limit on it, or end the game once each person has had the chance to start the line up. You can go for best time, or have several lines compete against one another.

6. Bean bag toss _____

Have the students get in a circle tossing a beanbag randomly to one another calling out the name of the person they are tossing it to before they toss it, with the rules "you can't let the beanbag(s) touch the floor" and "you have to keep the beanbag(s) moving". Once the kids are comfortable add another beanbag, and keep adding beanbags until the kids are struggling to keep up with them. Try to see how long the kids can keep it going and go for a classroom best time, with the most beanbags. You may want to compete against another classroom.

7. The Moving Alphabet _____

Call out each letter and a corresponding word or phrase that the students act out. E.g. "A" for apple, then the students can pretend to pick apples

For more information about how we can help you incorporate physical activity into your school day contact Danielle Shewfelt, Public Health Nurse, Health Promotion at: **(613) 256-1203** or our HealthAction line at: **1-800-660-5853**

Food Safety Tips for Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Submitted by Deborah Steele, C.P.H.I.(C) Public Health Inspector

When we think about food poisonings most of us probably associate it with meats or poultry. However, we can become sick from other foods such as fresh produce. In previous years there have been food borne illnesses linked to such foods as strawberries and cantaloupes. Recently in Ontario there were over 500 cases of Salmonellosis that were linked to consuming mung bean sprouts.

As fruits and vegetables are essential to a healthy diet we certainly don't want to stop eating them, but we do need to be aware of how to safely handle them.

Here are some healthy tips to consider:

Buying

- Select good quality produce that is not mouldy or damaged. Vegetables and fruit that are cut up and ready-to-eat should be displayed on ice or in a refrigerator.
- Keep your produce separate from raw meat, poultry and fish in the shopping cart. Also, they should be packed in separate bags.

Storing

- Refrigerate cut up ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables.
- Ensure refrigerated fruits and vegetables are store in a crisper or above raw meat and poultry so that the juices from these products do not drip onto the produce.

Before Preparing Fruits and Vegetables

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
- Ensure work surfaces are clean and sanitized. A mild bleach solution can be used as a sanitizer: 7ml bleach per 1 litre of water.

Preparing

- Wash fruit and vegetables with cool, running safe drinkable water. Produce with firm surfaces such as melons and potatoes can be scrubbed with a clean produce brush. Using soap or household detergents is not recommended as they can leave residues. Bleach or vinegar solutions are not recommended either.
- Refrigerate produce within two hours of peeling or cutting.

If your dog had fleas would you dye their fur?



Submitted by Carrie Kasurak, Public Health Nurse.

Does this sound kind of "far-fetched"? Well believe it or not some parents have decided to treat their children's head lice by colouring their hair!

Harvard medical school has indicated that there is no research evidence that suggests hair colour will treat head lice and therefore use of these products in an attempt to manage a case of head lice should not be considered. As well B.C. Disease Control lists hair dyes as just one of many other products including; insect sprays, motor oil, gasoline, alcohol, flea soaps and bleaches, that **should not** be used because they are either unsafe or do not work in treating head lice!

Poisoning

Submitted by Lois E. Dewey, BScN, RN, Public Health Nurse, Early Years, Injury Prevention, In Ontario:

- **There are over 2000 poisoning hospitalizations per year**
- **Poisoning from medication is the most frequent type**
- **Over 40,000 calls are received by the Ontario Regional Poison Information Centre (one of two in province)**
- **Cases of children under 6 years make up almost half of the calls.**

So you never have to make that call: _____

DO'S:

- **Lock up all medicines at home** such as over the counter medicines, prescriptions, vitamins, and natural or homeopathic remedies. Remember to include medicines from all family members and pets too! All medicines may be harmful if taken in large enough amounts.
- **Store all household chemicals, such as cleaners, automotive products, and garden chemicals, in a locked cupboard.** Many items can be included in this group. Some examples of this are baby oil, which is so commonly found near children and lamp oil, which is very toxic, particularly if inhaled.
- **Store all products in original containers.** Many adults and children are poisoned when products are moved into empty water bottles or other beverage containers and then mistakenly consumed. The label contains details that can be used if someone is poisoned and can also help to ensure that an unsuspecting person does not mistake the product for a beverage.
- **Be aware of the increased risk of poisonings during times of stress or when normal daily routines are disturbed.** (e.g., holidays, illness, or when friends or family come to visit. A visit to or from grandma may pose a particular risk with potential access to medications, etc. in unlocked cabinets, purse or suitcase.)
- **Read all medicine labels carefully. Ensure that the right person is taking the right medicine in the right dose and at the right time!**

DON'TS:

- **Don't keep medicine in a high, unlocked cupboard. It is not safe.** This may entice children to climb and access the medicine.
- **Don't rely on child-resistant packaging or child safety latches. They are not child proof.** Child resistant is designed to slow a curious child down, but if left unsupervised any child will be able to find a way to open the container. (It will take the average child about 5 minutes to open a child-resistant package and not nearly that long if the child is particularly adept.)

For poison information and advice call

Ontario Regional Poison Information Centre at 1-800-268-9017.

www.sickkids.ca/poisoninformationcentre

Canadian Association of Poison Control Centres: www.capcc.com/index.html

Safe Kids Canada: www.sickkids.ca/safekidscanada

SmartRisk Catalogue of Best Practices: www.smartrisk.ca/ListingSections.aspx?dd=4&sd=207

Character Always — Role modelling for your students' health

Submitted by Meena Parameswaran, MAN, RD, Registered Dietitian/Public Health Nutrition-

As a teacher, you know children copy what they see and hear. Whether it is acting like their favourite animal or repeating a song they have heard on the radio, kids are like sponges. This is how they learn. As a teacher you are a role model to your students. What you say and do has an impact on shaping your students' health habits for life, especially when it comes to healthy eating, physical activity, and self-esteem.

Healthy Eating

Students look to you while forming attitudes about food when it comes to food preferences and food choices. You can influence your student's food choices by teaching healthy eating habits through the curriculum and following this example in the classroom. If you eat healthy foods, your students will be more likely to eat these foods as well.

Easy ways to encourage healthy eating habits in the classroom:

- Avoid the use of food as a reward- Using sweets sends mixed messages to your students and also encourages eating when not hungry
- Praise a student who has a healthy snack
- Practice what you teach, if you teach healthy eating habits in the curriculum, students notice if you don't have healthy choices at your desk
- Have healthy snacks for special occasions- fruit plates, veggies and dip are fun alternatives to cakes and sweets

Physical Activity

Being physically active is an important part of healthy child development. Your students look to you as an example. Being active can be fun, simple and something you and your students can do every day. If you are active with your students, not only does it set a good example, it gets you up and moving too!

Easy ways to be more active at school:

- Have stretch breaks in class
- Join your students in gym class and during Daily Physical Activity
- Have a music break where students can move their bodies to a fun beat
- Set limits on your student's screen time (TV, computer, etc).

Weight Issues

Students learn how they feel about themselves from the people around them. Their perceptions are affected by the way you feel and talk about yourself and others. Students absorb what they hear outside of the classroom too. Lunchroom talks, talking to other teachers about weight issues and dieting also affects how students view their own bodies. Positive body image is linked to good self-esteem, and these two qualities build a student's confidence.

Easy ways to boost your student's self-esteem:

- Avoid criticizing your own body or the bodies of others.
- Teach your students that body images used by the media are not realistic. Healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes.
- Praise your student's actions and abilities often.

Remember, your students are listening, watching and learning from you. Start small. Avoid using food as a reward. Have a dance break in the middle of a long class. Participate in activities with your students. Remind them that healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes. Be a positive role model for your students.

For more information or curriculum support for healthy eating, physical activity, or body image, please contact the Health Unit. The Health Unit also has curriculum specific resources for healthy eating based on grade level.

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Advertising affects your child's eating: Be an informed consumer

Submitted by Meena Parameswaran MAN, RD, Registered Dietitian/Public Health Nutritionist

Children are exposed to many advertisements on the street, Internet, television, and at school. Children may view up to 40,000 commercials each year (1). Over 50 percent of ads on TV are for food. The majority of food advertised includes: soft drinks, chips, candy, French fries and sugary breakfast cereals, all of which are high in calories, fat, salt, and low in vitamins, minerals, and fibre. As a parent it is important that you are aware of food companies' influence. As well make your children aware of this influence, and make food choices based on health, not advertising.



Children are prime targets

Children and youth are the consumers of the future, which makes them valuable targets for food companies. Food advertising plays a big role in what children eat. Companies count on children to “nag” parents to buy their products. Some studies have shown that mothers who grocery shop with their kids end up spending, on average, 30% more than they originally intended. Food companies actually “buy” shelf space in order for their products to be at your child's eye level.

Unfortunately, the profit that children bring to food companies has a price tag on health. Some children now have “adult health issues” such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. Marketing of food products does not always consider your child's health.

What can parents do?

For many parents, it is challenging to compete with the messages their children get from powerful food companies. You cannot prevent your children from hearing these messages altogether. However, you can guide them to become informed consumers.

Be a positive role model

Advertising is powerful, but the strongest influence on children's eating patterns is parents' attitudes and beliefs about healthy eating. Be aware of what is influencing your food choices and lead a healthy example by:

- Filling the fridge and cupboards with healthy choices.
- Eating a healthy breakfast.
- Packing healthy lunches for school and work.
- Eating together, as a family.
- Planning family activities away from the TV.



Create supportive environments

Children's environments at home, school and in the community have a strong impact on food choices. Help create healthy places for your children.

At school:

Talk to decision-makers (parent councils, principals) to make changes to vending machines, cafeterias, food-related fundraising, special food days and food advertising.

In the community:

Speak up and encourage businesses to limit the marketing of unhealthy food to children. Point out to your children where these advertisements are and discuss them together.

At home:

Watch TV as a family. This way you can limit the time and screen the type of shows your children view. Mute the TV during commercials and use this time to talk about your child's day.

Empower your children

Talk to your kids about advertising. Identify different ways companies get children to buy their products. Point out how famous people and animals are used in ads. These activities will help children think critically about the messages and make their own conclusions.

Don't be fooled. Make your money count by being an informed consumer. Be aware of how companies are only interested in your dollar and not your child's health!

For more information on making healthy food choices for your children contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit's toll free Health Action line at 1-800-660-5853 (or 345-5685) and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian.

Is Your Child's Immunization Record Up To Date?

Submitted by Jamie Ferguson, Public Health Nurse

Did you know?

- ▶ It is the **parent's** responsibility to inform the Health Unit any time a child receives a vaccination.
- ▶ If there is an outbreak in the school, your child may be excluded if his/her record indicates that they are not up to date.

To update your child's record, contact the Immunization Program by:

E-mail at immunization@healthunit.org or

Fax to 613-345-7038 or

Mail to:

458 Laurier Blvd.

Brockville, ON K6V 7A3 or

Telephone at 613-345-5685 ext. 3031

or 1-800-660-5853 ext. 3031

Be sure to include child's name, birth date, OHIP number, school, immunization & date immunization given.

For more information regarding immunization visit www.healthunit.org/immunization/Default.htm.

Under the Immunization of School Pupils Act, 1990, the Medical Officer of Health is authorized to obtain immunization records of all school age children.

Every person who contravenes Section 3 [of the Immunization of School Pupils Act] is guilty of an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$1,000.00. (RSO1990, c.1.1, s.4.)

Pandemic Influenza

By Claire Farella, Public Health Nurse

What is Pandemic Influenza?

Pandemic influenza occurs when a new influenza virus appears, to which the human population has little or no immunity. This results in several, simultaneous epidemics world wide with enormous numbers of illnesses and deaths.



How does Pandemic Influenza Occur?

When all four of the following occur:

- A new influenza A virus is detected
- Human-to-human transmission happens easily
- The new virus causes serious clinical illness and death
- The population has little or no immunity to the virus

Ordinary Influenza	Pandemic Influenza
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs every winter between November and April • Peaks for few months during the winter and then declines • Affects 10% of population • Part of the population will have some immunity either because of previous exposure or they have been immunized with the annual flu vaccine. • Symptoms are unpleasant but most people do not become seriously ill or die • The very young, very old and people with certain chronic illnesses are most at risk • Can be prevented with annual vaccination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occurs 3 times a century (approx every 30 years), Spanish Flu 1918, Asian Flu 1957 and Hong Kong 1968. • Occur any time during the year • Occur in 2 to 3 waves several months apart, each wave lasting 6-8 weeks • May affect 25% of population • More serious infections and deaths will occur • People of every age may be at risk • No vaccine available at beginning of pandemic, will take approximately 6 months to develop • When available the whole population will be offered immunization • Antiviral medication may be used for treatment

How will the pandemic affect the community?

- There will be high levels of influenza in the general population, as it spreads rapidly and very few people will have immunity.
- The virus is spread **directly** when infected people cough or sneeze and droplets of their respiratory secretions come in contact with the mouth, nose and eyes of another person and **indirectly** when people touch surfaces, objects or hands of others that the virus is living on. The virus can live on hard surfaces for 24-48 hours, on cloth, paper and tissue for up to 8 hours and 5 minutes on hands.
- There will be increased pressure on health care services due to serious illness and death.
- Economic and social disruption will occur.

Are we prepared?

- Canadian government has prepared a Federal Pandemic Influenza Plan.
- Ontario government has prepared a Provincial Pandemic Influenza Plan.
- Tri-County of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark has prepared an influenza plan that links with both levels of government and with agencies within the community.
- Health care providers and community partners are being educated and trained in how to respond to a pandemic and cope with the demands that are likely to be placed on them.
- The Canadian government is taking steps to be in the best possible position for a vaccine to be manufactured as rapidly as possible.
- The federal and provincial government are building a stockpile of antiviral drugs that will be used in the most effective way to treat those most at risk of serious illness based on how the disease develops.

When pandemic influenza reaches Canada there will be announcements in the newspaper radio and television and advice will be given on the best course of action to take.

What can you do?

Some basic measures that you can take to reduce your risk of infection:

- The **most important measure is to practice hand hygiene; frequent hand washing** reduces the risk of picking the virus up from surfaces and passing it on to others.
- Practice cough etiquette such as covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Practice social distancing by avoiding large crowds of people whenever possible.
- When vaccine is available get immunized.

Potential Pandemic Outcomes for Leeds, Grenville & Lanark

- 120,000 people may be infected
- 24,000 to 60,800 may be clinically ill
- 13,530- 31, 569 may require outpatient care *
- 319- 745 may require hospitalization
- 77-179 deaths *



**Information obtained from Ontario Health Pandemic Influenza Plan (2005), Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care*

Why Handwashing Is Important During Flu Season

By Dr. Sheela Basrur, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health

Handwashing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

Follow these four simple steps to keep hands clean:

- Wet your hands with warm running water.
- Add soap, and rub your hands together, making a soapy lather. Do this away from the running water for at least 15 seconds, and do not wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of your hands, as well as between your fingers and under your nails.
- Rinse your hands well under warm running water. Let the water run back into the sink, not down your elbows. Turn off the water with a paper towel and place it in the garbage.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel.
- Wash your hands as described above at least 5 times a day.

There is more to handwashing than you think. By rubbing your hands vigorously with soapy water, you pull

the dirt and the oily soils free from your skin. The soap lather suspends both the dirt and germs trapped inside then gets quickly washed away.

Here are some common mistakes to avoid when handwashing:

- DON'T use a single damp cloth to wash a group of children's hands.
- DON'T use a standing basin of water to rinse hands.
- DON'T use a common hand towel. Always use disposable towels in daycare or food preparation settings.
- DON'T use sponges or non-disposable cleaning cloths, unless you launder them using detergent on a regular basis. Remember that germs thrive on moist surfaces.

Supervision is an essential element in forming good handwashing habits in children.

Children learn by example. Let them observe good handwashing techniques from their adult

6 Step Method of HANDWASHING

1. Wet Hands



2. Soap



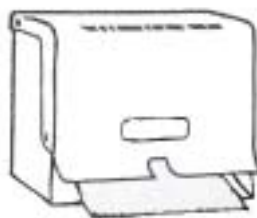
3. Lather



4. Rinse



5.



Towel Dry

6. Turn Taps Off With Towel

