



Hand Hygiene

The Weakest Link

As the cold and flu season arrives, many of us use common sense cleaning practices to protect our families and friends against harmful germs and viruses. But what about the place we spend most of our waking hours - WORK? A new survey released by the Soap and Detergent Association (SDA) revealed that public places, such as daycares and the workplace, are often a weak link in the fight to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as the flu.

What most people don't realize is that hand washing, when done correctly, is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Don't be fooled though - there is more to hand washing than you think! Washing often, about five or more times a day, is a good first step. But you also need to wash your hands *the right way*, washing thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. The action of rubbing your hands together vigorously with soapy water pulls dirt and germs free from your skin. The soap lather traps the dirt and germs which are then washed away.

*** The CDC recommends that a person wash their hands with soap and water when they are *visibly dirty* or contaminated. If hands are not visibly soiled, alcohol-based waterless hand sanitizers can be used for disinfecting your hands.

Proper Steps to Good Hygiene: Washing Your Hands The Right Way

1. Wet hands with **warm** running water prior to reaching for soap, either in bar or liquid form.
2. Rub hands together to make a lather. Do this away from running water, so the lather isn't washed away.
3. Wash the front and back of hands, between fingers and under nails. Continue washing for **15 seconds or more**.
4. Rinse hands well under warm running water.
5. Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel or air dryer.

*** Hand sanitizers (sprays or gels) or antibacterial wipes are useful alternatives if soap and water are not available (for example, when traveling in the car or taxi on the way to a business meeting, before eating an in-flight meal, or at outdoor work settings, etc.). Gels or sprays are perfect for people on-the-go, so keep this **Telcom Hand Sanitizing Spray** with you for moments when a bathroom is not available. Just remember, hand sanitizers are only effective if hands are not soiled.

Recommendations: When to Wash Hands at the Workplace

- After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- Each time you use the restroom
- Before and after a meet and greet activity in your office
- Before and after staff meetings if food is served
- After scanning through newspapers or magazines in your break room
- Before and after you eat your lunch
- After using your coworker's keyboard or tools
- Before and after using shared office equipment like faxes, phones, etc.

*** Putting up reminder signs in bathrooms, kitchens and other community areas have proven to be helpful with employee compliance.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you are a Policyholder and would like more information or antibacterial supplies for your staff.

Did you know?

- On average to battle the flu alone, Americans spend \$1.3 billion on direct medical costs. If you add lost productivity in the workplace, another \$15 billion can be added to the annual tab.
- Families who put sanitizers in bathrooms, bedrooms and the kitchen and used them before preparing food and after using the toilet are 59% less likely to spread a gastrointestinal bug to other family members as families who don't use sanitizers. Imagine what the use of hand sanitizers could do to prevent the spread of the cold if families used them after coughing and sneezing.

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QUARTER IV
NOVEMBER 2006

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