

**What's the
simplest way to
protect yourself
from...**

Handwashing is the
20-second solution
to help protect yourself and
others from getting sick.

All you have to do is:

- Use soap
- Wash often
- Wash for at least 20 seconds

**Wash
your
hands!**



**For more information about handwashing,
please contact:**

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Infectious Disease
Division of Epidemiology and Immunization
(617) 983-6800

or visit

www.mass.gov/handwashing

**Colds
Flu
Salmonella
Norovirus
Enterovirus**



clean
Your health is in your hands

Why

Washing your hands is the best way to get rid of germs, **avoid getting sick, and stop the spread of germs to others.**

You can get germs on your hands by simply touching a doorknob, pressing an elevator button, grabbing a pole on public transit or shaking hands.

Once these germs are on your hands, touching your mouth or nose to eat, sneeze or cough can make you sick.

Sneezing and coughing can spread cold germs into the air, but most colds are caught and spread through germs on people's hands. The germs that cause the **flu, norovirus and other viruses, such as enterovirus, can also be picked up and spread by your hands.**

What's more, outbreaks of **foodborne illness** that cause vomiting and diarrhea are often traced back to food prepared by someone who did not properly wash their hands.

When

Always wash your hands...

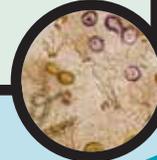
Before you

- touch or serve food
- eat or drink
- put in or take out contact lenses
- treat a cut, scrape, burn or blister
- take care of someone who is sick

After you

- go to the bathroom
- help someone else use the bathroom
- change a diaper (don't forget to wash the baby's hands too!)
- cough, sneeze, blow your nose or wipe a child's nose
- handle uncooked food, especially raw meat, poultry, fish or eggs
- handle garbage
- touch an animal – especially a reptile – or clean up animal waste
- take care of someone who is sick or injured
- use public transportation
- touch pet food or treats

The world is full of bacteria and other living things too small to see, most are harmless, but some can make you sick. You can't see them with the naked eye, but under the microscope they look like this:



How

Be sure and take the time to wash your hands correctly. Just **20 seconds** is all you need to prevent yourself from getting sick later.

Rinsing your hands with water isn't enough – to really get them clean you need to **use soap.**

Scrub your palms, between your fingers, the backs of your hands and under your fingernails for at least 20 seconds.

Dry your hands with a paper towel. Use the same paper towel to turn off the water and, if using the restroom, open the door.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based sanitizers can quickly kill most of the germs on your hands, but they do not get rid of all types of germs. Hand sanitizers work best when hands are not visibly dirty or greasy. Hand sanitizer should be applied to one hand then distributed over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Use regular soap. Antibacterial soap isn't necessary.

