



Advice on handwashing for the general public

Handwashing is the single most important method of reducing the spread of infection.

It is very important that everyone maintains high standards of hand hygiene if we want to reduce the spread of infection.

Handwashing with liquid soap and warm running water should remove most germs from the hands before they can be transferred to another person or object.

It is important that handwashing is carried out correctly to reduce the spread of germs.

Hands should always be washed:

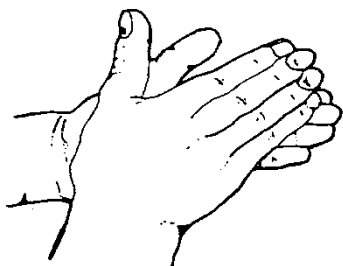
- after visiting the toilet
- before handling, preparing or serving food/drink
- when the hands are visibly dirty
- after contact with pets and animals
- after performing any cleaning (housework) and after handling refuse or waste
- after gardening
- after changing a baby's nappy or helping to toilet a child or adult
- after coughing or sneezing into the hands

Equipment needed for effective handwashing:

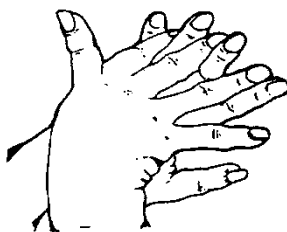
- handwash basin
- warm running water
- soap, preferably liquid soap
- clean hand towel or disposable paper towel
- hand towels should be regularly changed and should be washed at the highest possible temperature indicated on the manufacturer's label

Handwashing Technique:

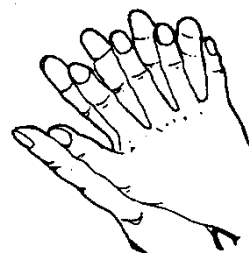
- wet hands and apply liquid soap
- rinse hands under warm running water
- dry hands thoroughly



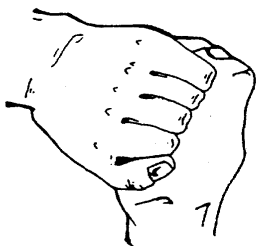
1. Palm to palm



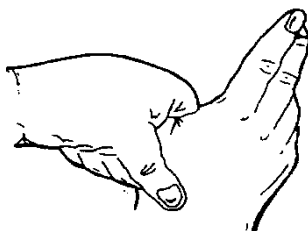
2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



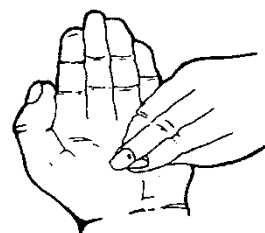
3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa

This factsheet has been reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team from the North West.

Further advice may be obtained from Cumbria and Lancashire Public Health England Centre. Telephone 0844 225 0602