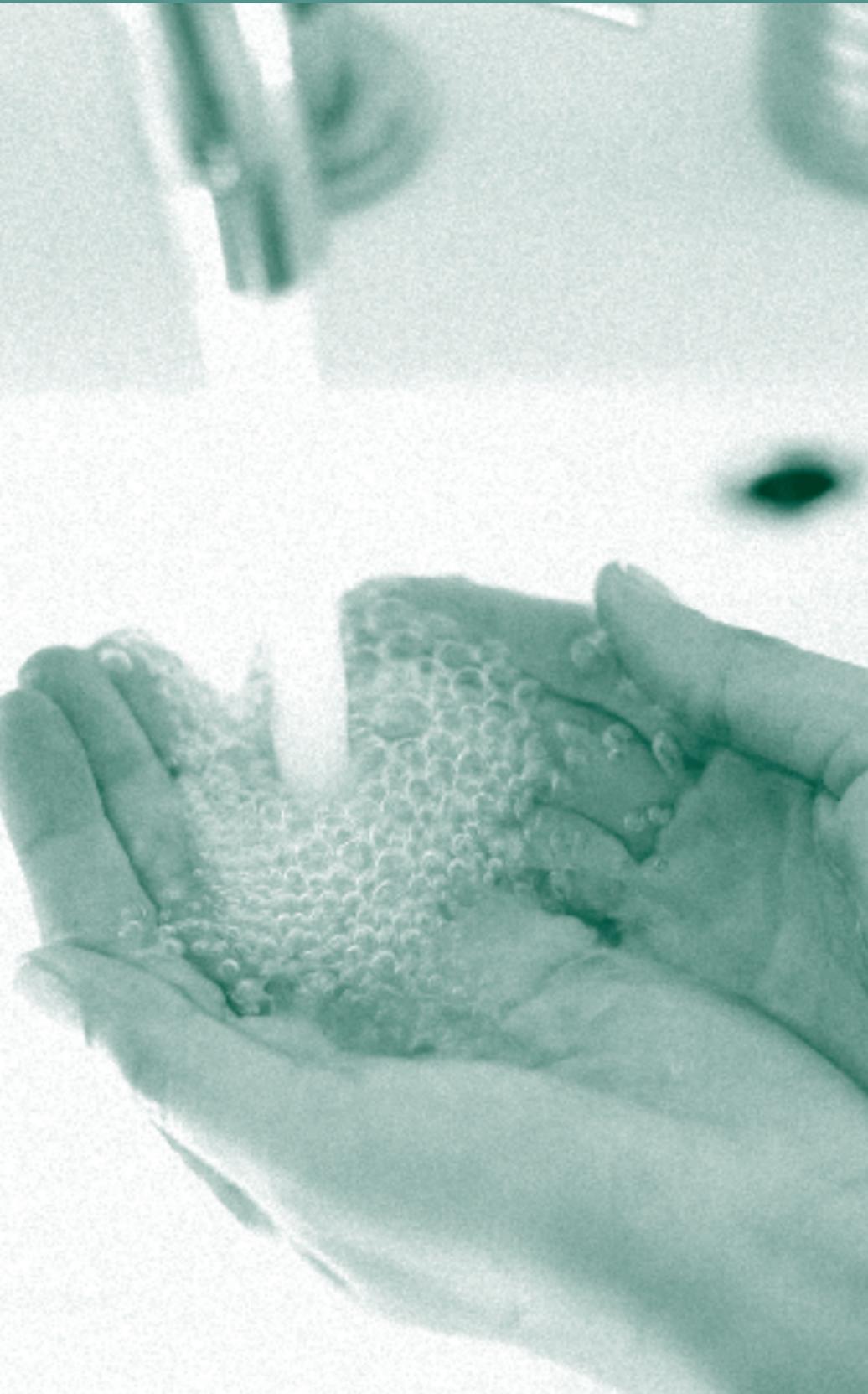


# HAND HYGIENE



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HEALTHCARE

# Stay Healthy

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hand hygiene is the most important factor in preventing the spread of germs. In fact, health experts estimate that 80 percent of common infections are spread through hand contact.



## **Make Clean Choices**

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In today's busy world it is not always possible or convenient for us to wash our hands as often as needed. When you can't get to a sink, experts recommend you use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. While good old soap and water are ideal when your hands are visibly dirty, hand sanitizers can significantly reduce the number of germs on your skin and are fast-acting.

## **Wash with Soap and Water**

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Remember that water simply rinses dirt and germs away; soap is what actually prevents them from sticking to your skin. Generally, liquid soap is better than bar soap.

For best results, wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap and warm water. Rub hands together, lathering and scrubbing all surfaces for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse your hands well under running water and dry them using a paper towel or air dryer. When in a public bathroom, use your paper towel to open the bathroom door if a trash can is near it.

## Use a Hand Sanitizer

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Evidence shows that instant hand sanitizers are more effective than soap in preventing infection, less irritating to the skin, and faster and easier to use. The main ingredient in hand sanitizers is alcohol, which kills 99.99% of bacteria in about 15 seconds.

Contrary to popular belief, frequent use of a hand sanitizer will not cause antibacterial resistance. Hand sanitizers evaporate quickly and thoroughly, so there is no residue left on your hands where germs can grow. Hand sanitizers are usually gentler to your skin as well. While it is true that alcohol by itself can be drying to the skin, instant hand sanitizers are formulated with moisturizers. Dry, cracked skin can more easily get infected.

For best results, apply the product to the palm of one hand and then rub your hands together. Continue to rub product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until hands are dry. Be sure to note that the volume needed to reduce the number of bacteria on hands varies by product, so read the product's instructions.

## Cleanse Your Hands Often

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Not only will cleansing your hands often help prevent you from getting sick, it will help you from getting others sick! Always wash with soap and water or a hand sanitizer after:

- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Going to the bathroom
- Changing diapers
- Handling animals or animal waste
- Handling garbage

Never prepare or eat food, tend to an ill person, or treat a cut or wound without clean hands. Use common sense. Consider all your hands come in contact with; just because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there!



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