



HOW SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

Use soap and warm, running water

Lather and wash hands thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers, and under fingernails for at least 20 seconds

Rinse hands well under warm, running water

Dry hands thoroughly with a clean paper or cloth towel or air dryer

Apply hand lotion if desired to help prevent and soothe dry skin

Washing hands with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds is a sensible strategy for hand hygiene in non-healthcare settings and is recommended by the CDC and other experts. Hand sanitizers are a good alternative to use when soap and water aren't available. However, when hands are visibly soiled, they should be washed with soap and water.

CLEAN HANDS ARE EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Clean Hands Campaign, a continuing educational effort sponsored by ASM and ACI, is designed to remind Americans that Mom was right – you need to wash your hands!

HAND HYGIENE INFORMATION ONLINE

The American Society for Microbiology maintains a website, www.washup.org, that has downloadable educational materials about hand hygiene, as well as results of recent and previous handwashing surveys.

The American Cleaning Institute® (formerly The Soap and Detergent Association) has updated hand hygiene-related news and educational materials on its website at www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/ and www.itsasnap.org.

ASM and ACI are members of the Clean Hands Coalition, an alliance of public and private partners working together to create and support coordinated, sustained initiatives to significantly improve health and save lives through clean hands. For information about National Clean Hands Week (the third week in September) and the "Clean Hands Save Lives" campaign, go to www.cleanhandscoalition.org.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site includes "Put Your Hands Together," a health education video to promote handwashing at www.cdc.gov/cleanhands/.



SUPPORT THE CLEAN HANDS CAMPAIGN



GET A GRIP on handwashing



HANDWASHING TAKES A HIKE—AMERICANS ARE GETTING THE MESSAGE

Mom's advice about cleaning your hands appears to be getting through. More adults than ever are washing their hands in public restrooms.

In results from the latest (2010) observational study of handwashing in public restrooms, 85% of people washed their hands, up significantly from the 77% observed in 2007 and the highest percentage observed since these studies began in 1996.

Overall, the rate of women washing their hands in public restrooms improved from 88% in 2007 to 93% in 2010. Among men, whose rate has always trailed that of women, 77% washed their hands in public restrooms in 2010, compared to 66% in 2007.



But there is still work to do—as good as these results are, they indicate one in six people still is not practicing good hand hygiene. And in telephone surveys, only 39% say they always wash their hands after coughing or sneezing.

See the full survey results at www.washup.org or www.cleaninginstitute.org.

Survey Methodology

Harris Interactive® conducted telephone and observational studies on behalf of the American Society for Microbiology and American Cleaning Institute in August 2010. Telephone surveys were conducted with 1,006 respondents. Results were weighted for age by gender, race/ethnicity, region, household size, and education where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. They observed the behavior of 6,028 adults (approximately equal numbers of men and women who appeared to be age 18 and older) in public restrooms located at major public attractions in the U.S. and recorded whether or not they washed their hands after using the facilities. The research was conducted in four cities and at six different locations: Atlanta – Turner Field; Chicago – Museum of Science and Industry and Shedd Aquarium; New York City – Penn Station and Grand Central Station; and San Francisco – Ferry Terminal Farmers Market.

WHEN SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

After using the restroom

Before, during, and after preparing food, especially raw meat, poultry, or seafood

Before and after meals and snacks

Before inserting or removing contact lenses

After touching animals or handling animal waste

After changing a diaper

Before and after caring for someone who is sick or injured

After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

More frequently when you or someone in your home is sick

Anytime your hands are dirty

FREQUENT AND PROPER HAND HYGIENE CAN STOP GERMS AND ILLNESS IN THEIR TRACKS.

Many cases of colds, flu, and foodborne illness are spread by unclean hands, and these diseases are responsible for billions of dollars each year in health care expenditures and productivity losses in the United States. Worldwide, infectious diseases remain the leading cause of illness and death and the third-leading cause of death in the United States.

Good hand hygiene will also reduce the risk of spreading germs that have become resistant to antibiotics, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA. Some viruses and bacteria can live two hours or longer on surfaces like tables, doorknobs, and telephones. These disease-causing germs can enter your body when your unwashed hands touch your nose, mouth, eyes, or open wounds. Simple handwashing with soap and water can in some cases reduce infections by more than 50 percent.¹



¹Didier Pittet, "Clean hands reduce the burden of disease," *The Lancet*, www.thelancet.com, Vol. 366, July 16 2005, pgs 185 – 187.