

# QUICK FACTS: WASH YOUR HANDS

- 1 WET** your hands with clean, running water. Preferably warm water.
- 2 SOAP** your hands.
- 3 RUB** vigorously for 20 seconds (that's twice through the "Happy Birthday to You" song) washing all surfaces: Palms and fingers, back of hands, wrists, between fingers and thumbs, and under and around all fingernails.
- 4 RINSE** thoroughly, rubbing all surfaces to remove all soap.
- 5 DRY** your hands rubbing vigorously with a paper towel or clean cloth.
- 6 IN PUBLIC** use the paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door to the washroom when exiting.

## HOW IT WORKS:

The soap suspends dirt and other soils that trap germs while the friction of rubbing your hands together pulls dirt and greasy or oily soils free from the skin. The warm running water washes away the soap, dirt, grease, and germs. The final friction of rubbing your hands on a towel physically removes even more germs. **Voila! Clean hands.**

## WHEN SHOULD I WASH MY HANDS?

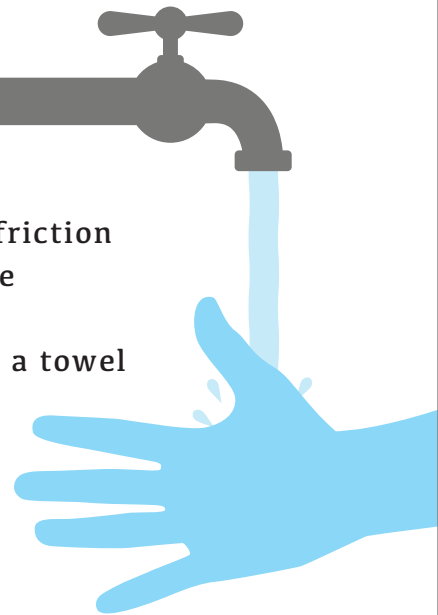
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal or animal waste
- After handling pet or animal food or pet treats
- After touching or taking out the garbage
- After working or playing outdoors
- After touching high-contact surfaces such as handrails, keyboards, etc.

## ABOUT HAND SANITIZER

Washing with soap and water is always best because you're washing germs away! Hand sanitizer will do in a pinch, but it is

### **NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR WASHING UP.**

If soap and water are not available use a 60% minimum alcohol-based hand sanitizer following directions on the label for best results.



[stopfoodborneillness.org](http://stopfoodborneillness.org)

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# QUICK FACTS: NOROVIRUS

Often called “food poisoning” or “stomach flu,” typical symptoms include cramping, diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain.

## Wash Up and Stay Down – Preventing the Spread

**To prevent infection and spread of norovirus always wash your hands with soap and water:**

Running Water + Soap + Friction = Clean Hands. The most important food safety action you can take is just washing up before and after touching food.

**Are you sick? Don't prepare food or care for others.** During your illness and at least 2-3 days after your recovery you're still highly contagious. This is especially important for workers in schools, daycares, food establishments, and other places where they may expose people to norovirus. Keep sick infants and children out of areas where food is being handled and prepared. Foods that might be contaminated should be thrown out.

**Rinse your produce.** Fruits and veggies are not naturally clean and may contain harmful germs from the soil and water in which it grows. It can also get dirty during transport, storage, and handling from the warehouse to the point of sale.

**Cook your seafood thoroughly.** Oysters and shellfish must be cooked thoroughly before eating. Noroviruses are relatively resistant and able to survive quick steaming processes that are often used for cooking shellfish, as well as temperatures as high as 140°F (60°C).

**Clean and disinfect contaminated surfaces after throwing up or having diarrhea.** Use a chlorine bleach solution with a concentration of 1000-5000 ppm (5-25 tablespoons of household bleach per gallon of water). Or an EPA-registered norovirus disinfectant.

**Wash laundry a maximum cycle with detergent and machine dry.** Remove and wash clothes or linens that may be contaminated with vomit or feces. Wear gloves and handle contaminated items to avoid dispersal of the virus into the air.

**Everyone's Game:** There are many types of norovirus, so you can get infected and sick many times in your life. The Centers for Disease Control estimates there are 19 to 21 million cases every year. Average incubation is 12-48 hours. Symptoms typically resolve within 1-3 days in healthy persons.

**Seriously:** Vulnerable populations like the elderly, young children and those with compromised immune systems are particularly susceptible. Each year norovirus causes about 70,000 hospitalizations and 800 deaths, mostly in young children and the elderly. Norovirus is relatively stable in the environment and can survive freezing and heating to 140°F. It can survive on surfaces for prolonged periods of time. Care settings that have established norovirus policies and guidelines are better equipped when an outbreak occurs.

**Easy Spreads:** People with norovirus illness shed billions of virus particles in their stool and vomit and can easily infect others. You are most contagious from the moment you start feeling ill to the first 3 days after your recovery. Norovirus can spread quickly in closed places like daycares, nursing homes, schools, and cruise ships. It can be spread by eating and drinking contaminated foods and liquids, touching surfaces or objects that are contaminated and then putting your fingers in your mouth, and by having close personal contact with an infected person.

**There are drugs for that, right?** No. There is no vaccine for norovirus prevention and since antibiotics do not work on viruses, they won't work on norovirus. Dehydration is the most common complication, which is treated best with fluid replacement.

