

5 myths of handwashing

MYTH: Very hot water is necessary.

FACT: Hot or cold water causes discomfort and ineffective washing and rinsing. Most soaps work with warm water. Using water that is too hot also removes some of the protective oils naturally found on skin.

MYTH: Antimicrobial soap is necessary.

FACT: Studies have shown that ordinary soap (those without antimicrobial components) work just as well at preventing bacteria and germ transmission as antimicrobial soap products.

MYTH: Cloth towels work fine to dry hands.

FACT: Bacteria numbers increase in damp towels leading to recontamination of hands. A paper towel or hot air dryer are your best choices for drying hands.

MYTH: Hand sanitizers are as good as washing.

FACT: Hand sanitizers do not work on soiled hands and are ineffective against Norovirus, the leading cause of gastroenteritis in the United States. Washing with soap and water is your best bet for clean hands.

MYTH: You only need to wash after using the bathroom.

FACT: Wash your hands any time they are contaminated. For example:

- After using the restroom or changing a diaper
- After touching any animal (even a pet)
- After any contact with juices from uncooked meats and poultry
- Before preparing foods
- Before eating
- After contact with items that are likely to have been touched by many people such as money, bingo markers, counters, door handles, etc.

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