



Stop Disease: Wash your hands!

When was the last time you washed your hands?

The most important thing that you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands. It is estimated that one out of three people do not wash their hands after using the restroom. By frequently washing your hands, you wash away germs that you may have picked up from other people or contaminated surfaces. Many diseases, such as the common cold, flu, hepatitis A, meningitis and infectious diarrhea can be prevented if people wash their hands. Frequent handwashing also prevents others around you from becoming sick with germs that you could unknowingly spread.

When should you wash your hands?

You should wash your hands often.

- Especially before, during and after you prepare food
- Before you eat food or drink
- After you use the bathroom
- After handling animals or animal waste
- When your hands are dirty
- Frequent handwashing should be done when someone around you is sick

How do you correctly wash your hands?

- Use soap and running water
- First wet your hands, then apply soap (liquid or clean soap bar)
- Rub your hands vigorously
- Scrub all surfaces for at least 15 seconds (it is the soap along with the scrubbing action that helps to get rid of germs)
- Be sure to wash those areas that carry germs most often
 - Back of hands
 - Wrists
 - Between fingers
 - Under fingernails
- Rinse well
- Dry hands with paper towel
- Turn off water faucet using a paper towel

*For more information, please contact
Boston Public Health Commission
Communicable Disease Control
(617) 534-5611 or www.bphc.org/cdc*