

# Hand washing and nose wiping

## Why is it important to help your child wash their hands and wipe their nose?

Supporting your child to learn how to wash their hands and wipe their nose properly will help reduce the spread of infection. This is particularly important when they attend child care and are mixing with other children.

## When should you and your child wash your hands?

It is recommended that you and your child wash your hands often and especially:

- when you arrive/depart from child care
- before and after eating or handling food
- after cleaning or handling garbage
- after outdoor play
- after nappy change, and toileting of self or children
- after dealing with body fluids (for example, blood, nose secretions, vomit)
- after handling animals

Assist and encourage your child to wash their hands regularly. When you are washing your hands talk about the activity you have just finished, thus reminding the child of the times when they should wash their hands.

## How should you wash your hands?

It is recommended that you wash your hands:

- using liquid soap for 10-15 seconds,
- rub all hand surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, back and front of hands, between fingers and underneath rings,
- rinse hands with running warm water, and
- dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel. This can also be used to turn the tap off.



In some situations it may not be possible to use soap and water. You can then use non-water cleansers or antiseptics such as alcohol based hand rub, gel or foam. Be careful that your child does not inhale the fumes.

## How should you wipe your child's nose?

It is best to use a clean tissue when wiping your child's nose and dispose of the used tissue safely and appropriately – ideally in a covered rubbish bin. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

Child care staff will often use gloves when wiping your child's nose. You may like to explain to your child that gloves are being used to help stop the spread of "germs" and so they don't get sick.

## How can you get your child involved?

- Show your child how to wash their hands and wipe their nose in a fun and supportive way.
- Make sure they can get the tissues and have a place to wash their hands.
- Give positive feedback when your child tries. Allow them to 'own' their development and encourage them to try again next time. For example, say "Well done! Let's look in the mirror and see if there is more that you can wash/wipe".
- You may want to put up some pictures and/or develop simple songs or rhymes to follow.
- Your child will model your actions.

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