Importance of Hand Washing

- Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent sickness and spreading germs to others.
- Good hand washing can fight the spread of the common cold, meningitis, bronchitis, influenza, hepatitis A, and most types of infectious diarrhea.

When should you wash your 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 your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage
The correct steps to wash your hands:

1. Wet your hands with cleaning running water (warm or hot as tolerated), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hand well under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.
6. Use your paper towel to turn off the water after you are finished.

What to do if you do not have soap and running water:

If soap and running water is not available, you should use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers do **NOT** eliminate all types of germs, however it can help reduce the number of microbes on the hands.

If the hands are visibly dirty or greasy, hand sanitizers are **not** as effective and the hands should be washed with soap and water if possible.

The proper way to use hand sanitizers:

1. Apply the product into the palm of one hand.
2. Rub your hands together.
3. Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Your Health is in Your Hands!