

Clean Your Hands



This information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is for veterans, their families, friends, visitors, volunteers, and employees. It describes when and how to clean hands with soap and water or, with alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

What You Use to Clean Your Hands

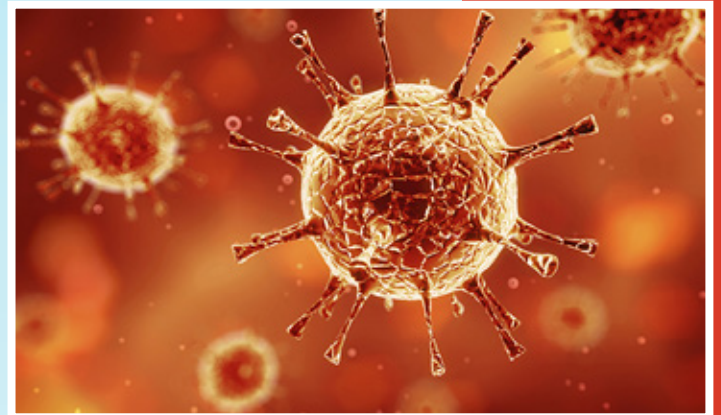
Alcohol hand sanitizers

- are alcohol-based liquid, gel, rub, or foam hand cleaners
- don't require water to clean hands
- kill most germs that cause disease and illness (like colds or flu)
- are not effective on germs that live in your intestines

Not all hand sanitizers contain alcohol: Check the label. Use only alcohol-based sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol.

Use soap & water instead of alcohol hand sanitizer

- when hands are visibly dirty or soiled
- before eating or preparing food, after handling raw meat, after handling animal waste, and after using the restroom, changing diapers, or assisting someone with toileting



How to Clean Your Hands

Using soap and water

1. Wet hands using warm water
2. Add soap to make lather
3. Rub palms, back of hands, and between fingers
4. Rub for at least 15 seconds
5. Rinse hands and dry well

Using alcohol-based hand sanitizers

1. Apply to the palm of one hand (to use on BOTH hands)
2. Rub palms, back of hands, and between fingers
3. Rub until hands are dry (if it does not take at least 30 seconds, you may need to add more alcohol hand sanitizer)

Cleaning hands properly is easy and quick!



When to Clean Your Hands

Clean hands before

- eating or preparing food (use soap and water)
- caring for someone who is sick
- treating a cut or wound
- visiting a patient's room

Clean hands after

- going to the bathroom (use soap and water)
- handling raw meat (use soap and water)
- handling animal waste (use soap and water)
- changing diapers or assisting someone with toileting (use soap and water)
- caring for someone sick
- blowing your nose
- coughing or sneezing
- touching garbage
- touching an animal
- treating a cut or wound
- leaving a patient's room

Clean hands help keep germs away!



Together we can stop the spread of germs.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing

www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits

NOTE: This information is NOT intended to address specific hand decontamination requirements for health professionals caring for patients.



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Public Health
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420
publichealth@va.gov

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Office of Public Health

October 2015 | HANDS FS-13

This material is NOT copyrighted and may be reproduced.

www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn