



Tis the season of COVID, Flu and other viruses and bacteria which can make us sick. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible because handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs and chemicals on hands. But if soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Handwashing with soap and water is recommended in the following circumstances.

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **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** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage
- If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, you should immediately clean your hands by either washing them with soap and water or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Which is better, hand sanitizer or handwashing?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to remove all types of germs and chemicals. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Handwashing will remove all types of germs from your hands. Hand sanitizers may work well against certain types of germs on slightly soiled hands, however hands may become very greasy or soiled in community settings, such as after people handle food, play sports, work in the garden, or go camping or fishing. When hands are heavily soiled or greasy, hand sanitizers may not work well [3,7,16](#).

Practicing good hand hygiene is a simple way to help prevent the spread of infection and reduce the risk of infection caused by germs. Each and every one of us can practice good hand hygiene daily.

Reference: Center for Disease Control [Handwashing - Clean Hands Save Lives | CDC Know When to Wash Your Hands poster - 11x17 \(cdc.gov\)](#)