



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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NEWS

The Other Side of Hand Washing

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO – Hand washing is the single most important way to stop the spread of disease. However, avoiding touching our eyes, noses and mouths also protects us from illness. Germs enter the body through the membranes of the mouth, nose, or eyes usually transferred to these membranes by your fingers or hands.

Illnesses like colds and flu are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. People can get ill if they touch hard surfaces and objects such as keyboards, telephones and doorknobs that an infected person recently touched and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth. Some viruses and bacteria can live 2 hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs and desks.

“Hand washing is essential, but it is so important that we learn to avoid touching the T Zone – our eyes, noses and mouths – because this is how germs enter our bodies,” said Dr. Will Sawyer, a local physician and creator of Henry the Hand Champion Handwasher.

Regular cleaning of areas and items that are likely to have frequent hand contact such as keyboards and doorknobs is an effective way to reduce the number of germs present. Special cleaning with bleach and other special cleaners is not necessary.

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. It is best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. Hand washing with soap and water is the best option for cleaning your hands. Everyone should thoroughly wash their hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- After using the bathroom
- After changing diapers
- Before preparing, serving or eating food

However, if soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product to clean your hands if your there is no visible dirt on them. Alcohol-based hand rubs reduce germs on skin except for some cases like with C Diff and Crypto. When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Place enough product in your palm to thoroughly cover your hands.
- Rub hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

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