

Living Safely

with disabilities and special health needs

Hand Hygiene

Germs and dirt can be anywhere. They can get onto hands and items we touch during daily activities and make us sick.

Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water or hand sanitizer is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to those around you.

There are important differences between washing hands with soap and water and using hand sanitizer.

Soap and water work to remove all types of germs and dirt from your hands, while sanitizer acts by killing certain germs on the skin.

Do not use hand sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty or greasy—for example, after gardening, playing outdoors, fishing, or camping. If a handwashing station is available, wash your hands with soap and water instead.

Hand sanitizers may not remove harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and heavy metals like lead.

These are some of the times when you should use soap and water

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before and after 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 bathroom
- 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

Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

We value the expertise of our partners in safety who have demonstrated their commitment to inclusive healthy communities.

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