

Hand Hygiene

Frequent hand hygiene, including washing with soap and water or the use of an alcohol based hand rub is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infection.

How to clean your hands with soap and water:

1. Wet hands thoroughly with warm running water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Lather well, rubbing all hand surfaces for at least 15 seconds. Pay special attention to thumbs, between fingers, backs of hands, and under finger nails.
4. Rinse hands well under running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean towel.

Tips for using a public washroom:

- Use a paper towel to turn off the taps after you finish rinsing your hands.
- Use a paper towel to open the door to exit the public washroom.

How to clean your hands using alcohol-based hand rub:

- Apply enough alcohol-based hand rub to ensure complete coverage.
- Rub hands together and cover all surfaces including thumbs, between fingers, backs of hands, and under finger nails.
- Rub surfaces until completely dry (should take at least 15 seconds).

* Alcohol-based hand rubs are not effective if hands are visibly dirty. If your hands are dirty, soap and water must be used. Alcohol-based hand rub should contain 60-90 percent alcohol.

Perform hand hygiene BEFORE:

- preparing, serving or eating food or feeding others,
- brushing or flossing your teeth,
- putting in or taking out contact lenses,
- treating wounds or cuts, and
- providing care to someone who is sick.

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Perform hand hygiene AFTER:

- any contact with a sick person or their environment,
- using the toilet, helping a child use the toilet, or changing a diaper (should use soap and water),
- blowing or wiping your nose, or wiping the nose of a child,
- coughing or sneezing,
- handling garbage,
- treating wounds or cuts,
- handling or cleaning up after pets, and
- any time hands look or feel dirty.

For more information, contact KFL&A Public Health at 613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875.

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