



**Central Michigan District Health Department**  
***“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”***

For more information, call your local CMDHD branch office:

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[www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)

## HANDWASHING

The most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of illness is to wash your hands and your children's hands thoroughly and often.

**This is how you should wash your hands:**

- Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm running water and soap. Make sure you have lots of bubbles.
- Wash under fingernails, between fingers, back of hands and wrists.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands with a single-use paper towel or hot air blow dryer.
- If your towel dispenser has a handle, be sure to roll the paper down *before you wash your hands*. This helps to insure that you will not pick up new germs from the handle.
- For hand-held faucets, turn off water using paper towel instead of bare hands so you will not pick up new germs on your clean hands. You may want to open the bathroom door with the same paper towel and then throw away.

**These are times when you should wash your hands:**

- After you use the bathroom or help a child use the bathroom
- After you change a diaper
- After you handle items soiled with body fluids or wastes such as blood, drool, urine, stool or discharge from nose or eyes
- After you clean up messes
- After you handle a sick child
- Before you prepare or serve food
- Before you eat or drink
- After handling pets or touching animals or reptiles

**These are times when you should wash your children's hands:**

- When they arrive home from day care, a friend's home, another outing or school
- After they use the toilet or have their diapers changed
- After they have touched a child who may be sick or have handled soiled items
- Before they eat or drink