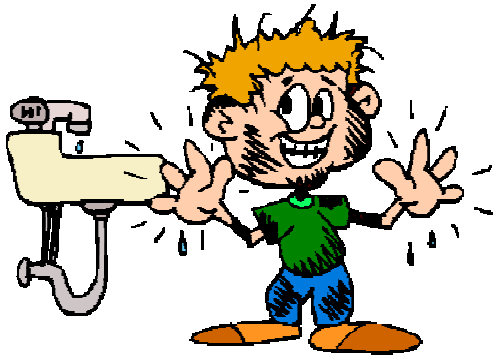
How to Keep Good Health in Your Hands

It is important to teach children when and how to wash their hands. One of the best ways for them to learn is for you to set a good example with proper, frequent handwashing:

- Make a game of handwashing. Remember that the person who takes the longest has killed the most germs.
- Use stickers or other small rewards to help make handwashing a regular habit for kids.
- Pack paper towels, soap or pre-wet cloths for playgrounds, petting zoos, and road trips.
- Let children use special soap or soap containers to encourage the idea that handwashing is fun.



PROPER HANDWASHING IS THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO STOP THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

Every time you touch your hands to your mouth, you can get sick. Eating, smoking, nail-biting, thumb-sucking, handling food, and touching toys are all ways germs can spread. Even shaking a hand or opening a door can transfer germs to you.

Use warm water, lather with soap, scrub between

Rinse with water...

Dry hands thoroughly with a paper towel.

Hand Washing for Better Health

Panhandle Health District 1

July 1999

WHY

SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

Bacteria and viruses (germs) that cause illnesses are spread when you don't wash your hands.

If you don't wash your hands, you risk acquiring:

- The common cold or flu
- Gastrointestinal illnesses
- Shigella or hepatitis A
- Respiratory illnesses

WHEN

SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

You need to wash your hands several times every day. Some important times to wash your hands are:

BEFORE:

- Preparing or eating food
- Treating a cut wound
- Tending to someone who is sick
- Inserting or removing contacts

AFTER:

- Using the bathroom
- Changing a diaper or helping a child use the bathroom (don't forget the child's hands)
- Handling raw meats/poultry/eggs
- Touching pets, especially reptiles
- Handling garbage
- Sneezing or blowing your nose, or helping a child blow his/her nose
- Touching any body fluids like blood or mucus
- Being in contact with a sick person
- Playing outside or with children and their toys

HOW

SHOULD YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

There is a ***right*** way to wash your hands. Follow these steps and you will help protect yourself and your family from illness. Like any good habit, proper handwashing must be taught. Take the time to teach it to your children and make sure they practice.

STEP 1: Use warm running water and plenty of soap. The soap doesn't have to be antibacterial.

STEP 2: Rub hands together for at least 15 or 20 seconds to make a good lather. Make sure you scrub under your fingernails and the backs of your hands.

STEP 3: Rinse well.

STEP 4: Dry your hands thoroughly. At home, provide each child with his or her own clean towel or paper towels. Use the towel to shut off the water faucet. Keep the faucet handles clean.