



Share the Wellness Tip

January 4, 2013

All Washed Up

Washing your hands is one of the most important ways to reduce your risk of getting sick or spreading germs. Good hand washing protects against the spread of many illnesses from the common cold to the more serious such as flu, meningitis, and most types of infectious diarrhea. But how savvy is your hand-washing style? Review these three quick tips for keeping it clean:

- **Nothing beats old-fashioned soap and water for getting your hands clean.** Washing your hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs. Rub your hands together to work up a lather, and scrub them well. Don't forget to wash the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can reduce your risk for infection.** Washing with soap and water is the best choice. But if soap and water aren't available, an alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60 percent alcohol is a good alternative. But keep in mind that hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty.
- **The CDC recommends washing your hands for at least 20 seconds at a time.** The CDC advises washing your hands for at least 20 seconds. That's about the time it takes to hum "Happy Birthday to You" twice.

For more information and resources on hand washing and infectious disease prevention visit the health and wellness section of the [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas website](#).

Sources: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), [Kidshealth.org](#)



Hand washing stops the spread of germs.