

# How to properly wash your hands

February 27 2020, by From Mayo Clinic News Network

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A 20-second way to prevent illness is to wash your hands properly. Knowing when and how to wash your hands will help you avoid sickness from the flu along with a number of diseases. It seems simple enough,

but you'd be surprised to find out many people are washing their hands all wrong.

Children often are taught at a young age to wash their hands—before eating and after using the restroom. It's an easy and effective way to stay healthy and avoid spreading disease.

But Dr. Gregory Poland, director of Mayo Clinic's Vaccine Research Group, says [adults](#) could do much better at the sink.

"People go to the bathroom, and they run their fingers under the water. Well, that does nothing. And then they grab the dirty faucet, and they touch the dirty handle on the way out of the bathroom."

Dr. Poland says that, in public washrooms, there are often more bacteria on those faucets than in the toilet water.

Next time you're at the sink, Dr. Poland says, "Wash your hands while singing 'Happy Birthday' to yourself. You get between the fingers, the fingertips, the thumb. You turn the water off with a paper towel. And you open the door to leave with a paper towel and dispose of the paper towel. That's how you wash your hands—ideally with warm, soapy water."

©2020 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research  
Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

Citation: How to properly wash your hands (2020, February 27) retrieved 31 December 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-02-properly.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.