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Teaching Children to Wash Their Hands

by Amber Hodgson, M.A., CCC-SLP

Washing your hands is one of the most important things you can do to keep germs and illness from spreading. It is also one of the simplest! Still, many children do not know *how* to properly wash their hands. Below is a step-by-step guide to help children develop healthy hand washing habits. Remember to instruct them to use plenty of soap and scrub their hands for at least 20 seconds. To help them keep track of time, you can teach them to hum a song like "Happy Birthday" or "ABCs."



1. Turn on warm water from the faucet and wet your hands.



2. Put soap on your hands. Pump soap from a bottle or rub a bar of soap between your hands.



3. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Scrub between your fingers too.



4. Rinse your hands under the water until all of the soap is gone.



5. Turn off the water faucet.



6. Dry your hands with a clean towel.



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(cont.)

Children also need to know *when* to wash their hands. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010), the following are times to wash your hands:



- Before, during, and after preparing food;

- Before eating food;



- After using the toilet;

- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet;



- Before and after caring for someone who is sick;

- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;



- After touching an animal or animal waste;



- After touching garbage; and

- Before and after treating a cut or wound.



Resources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). Wash your hands. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing/>

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