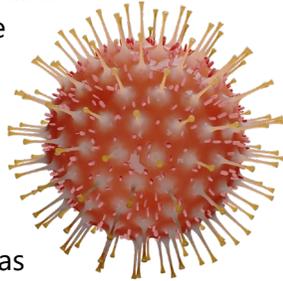


HAND HYGIENE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective actions you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus. This starts with washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water. These recommendations are based on standards from the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization.

WHY HAND WASHING IS EFFECTIVE

- Under a microscope, coronaviruses appear to be spheres that are covered with spikes, giving them the appearance of having a crown or "corona." Beneath the crown is the outer layer of the virus, which is made up of lipids, otherwise known as fat.
- Since soap dissolves fat, it can disrupt the molecular bonds in the fatty outer membrane of the coronavirus cell.
- Washing your hands properly with soap and water does not just remove the coronavirus; it can actually **destroy** the virus as it is washed away.



WASH YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. This is especially important after you have been in a public place or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- **Wet:** Put both your hands under clean, running water.
- **Lather:** Apply a generous amount of soap to the inside and back of your hands as well as your fingertips.
- **Scrub:** Wash for at least **20 seconds**. Rub both hands together and move your fingertips around both hands. Remember to wash under jewelry and fingernails.
 - Time is needed to allow the soap to interact back and forth with the virus particle.
 - In one study, it was noted that the most common shortcoming for most people was the amount of time they spent washing their hands. Only 5% spent more than 15 seconds washing their hands.
- **Rinse:** Use running water to rinse away the soap.
- **Dry:** According to the researchers, it is best to dry hands completely, preferably using disposable paper towels or a clean, unused cloth towel.

SANITIZE YOUR HANDS PROPERLY

- When washing with soap and water is not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be effective if they are used correctly.
- They must have at least 60% - 70% alcohol.
- To affect the germ membrane, the alcohol must come in direct contact with the virus.
- Placing a small amount of sanitizer in the hand and quickly wiping it away is usually not sufficient.
- Use enough product to cover every part of your hands, including the areas between your fingers and on the back.
- Rub your hands together until they feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

For additional information see:

- [Wash and Dry Your Hands! \(g98 11/22 p. 31\)](#)
- [CDC Hand Hygiene Recommendations](#)