

## Overview

- Washing your hands is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of many epidemics, especially diarrhoeal diseases .
- Handwashing is easy and everyone (including children) can do it.
- To be able to wash their hands, people need running water, liquid soap or ash, and paper towels.

## When to wash hands

### Wash your hands **BEFORE**:

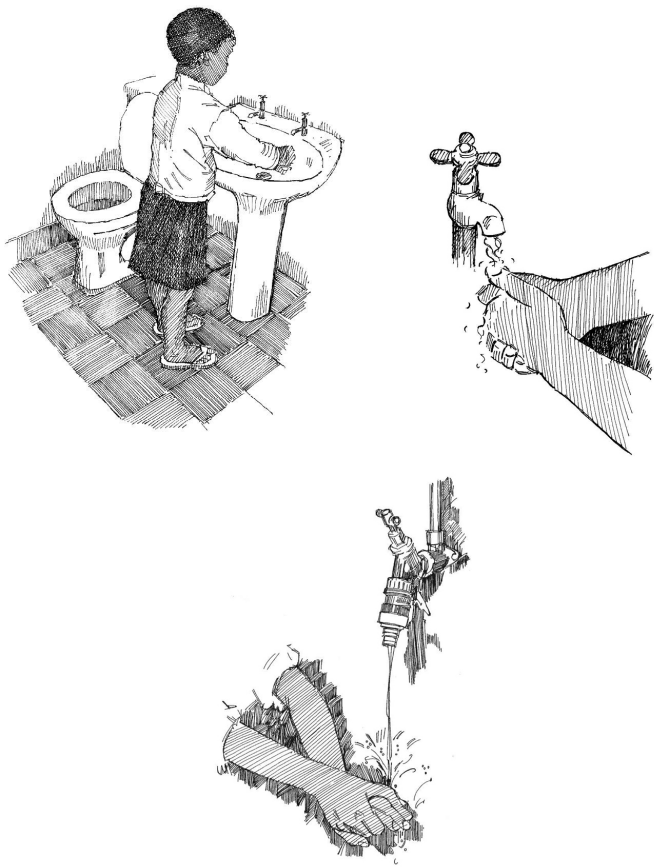
- Preparing or eating food.
- Treating a wound (yours or someone else's).
- Caring for someone who is ill.
- Breastfeeding.

### Wash your hands **AFTER**:

- Using the toilet.
- Washing or changing a baby or infant.
- Coughing or sneezing.
- Caring for someone who is ill.
- Coming into contact with a sick person in an epidemic (see Action tool 35 ).
- Handling raw meat.
- Contact with animals (including pets).
- Handling rubbish or anything that might be contaminated.

## How to wash hands

- Wet your hands and rub them with soap or ash.
- Rub all parts of your hands together for 10 to 15 seconds.
- Use lots of force (push your hands together hard) and remember to wash all surfaces, including the backs of the hands and between the fingers.
- Rinse hands well so they are free of soap or ash.
- Dry hands with a paper towel. If there is no towel, wave them in the air until they are dry.



*1. Wet your hands and use soap or ash. 2. Wash for 10 to 15 seconds. 3. Rinse hands well.*

## Community messages

See the following community messages to support handwashing with soap:

8 - Washing hands with soap

9 - When to wash hands