**Did You know?**

* The most common place for bacteria to spread is Bathroom.
* Things like mobile phones, doorknobs, credit cards, elevator buttons are the sources where bacteria get transferred to your body.
* 94% of dollar bills in the market has tested for faecal traces on them. 26000 live bacteria found on bank notes.
* Up to 80% of communicable diseases are transferred by touch.
* On average, you come into contact with 300 surfaces every 30 minutes, exposing you to 840,000 germs.
* Smart phones can carry more than 30000 bacteria units per swab.
* Failing to wash hands correctly contributes to nearly 50% of all foodborne illness outbreaks.
* Most bacteria on our hands is on the fingertips and under the nails.
* Damp hands are 1,000x more likely to spread bacteria than dry hands.
* People often touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without realizing it, introducing germs into their bodies.
* Germs from unwashed hands may get into foods and drinks and can grow there and make people sick.
* Average person’s hands carry 3000 different bacteria.
* Flu germs can spread entire day before symptoms begin.

**Fun Facts**

* Ash and mud can be used a s soap substitute.
* Soap and water together are the best way to wash hands.
* There is debate about whether hand dryer or paper towels are cleaner.
* If the water was hot enough to kill bacteria, it would scald your hands.
* Hand sanitizer gels come in tons of cool scents.–
* 1 gram of human faeces can contain 10m viruses and 1m bacteria.
* Plain soaps are just as effective as anti-bacterial ones for reducing instances of illness.
* Germs can survive on hands up to 3 hours.
* A sneeze can propel 100000 bacteria into the air at 100mph.
* A single germ can multiply to 8 million germs in one day.
* Top-most germs on hands are:
  + Salmonella
  + E. coli
  + Norovirus

**Facts about different abilities:**

* **Water**:
  + It is not enough because, fats and proteins don’t dissolve in water alone.
* **Liquid Soap:**
  + Antibacterial soap is no more effective than regular soap bar.
* **Hand Sanitizers (Alcohol based):**
  + Alcohol based hand sanitizers can kill 90% of the germs.
  + *30 seconds* after using one of these hand gels or rubs, *99.97%* of bacteria on the hands are killed.
  + They are less effective against certain *viruses*, including the *Norovirus*.
  + They are less effective than water and soap when a hands are dirty or greasy.

**Health Dangers of not Washing Hands**

* Bad Bacteria can lead to diarrhoea and intestinal diseases.
* It can get into your eyes causing eye infections like
  + Conjunctivitis.
  + Keratitis.
  + Stye.
  + Blepharitis.
* Germs can cause respiratory infections like
  + Cold
  + Flu

**Actual hand washing practices**

A recent study conducted by Sandoz provided this data.

* 10% of people do not wash their hands after using toilet.
* Signs or Reminders influence and improve handwashing behaviour.
* People are more likely to wash their hands in the morning than in evening or afternoon.
* 7 seconds is the average time people spend on handwashing; recommended duration is 20 seconds.
* 23% people don’t use soap while washing hands.
* More women than men wash their hands.
* 1 in 10 people do not dry their hands after leaving restrooms.

**Ideal Hand washing practices**

Handwashing at any time of the day can help get rid of germs, but there are key times when it’s most important to wash your hands.

• Before, during, and after preparing food

• Before eating food

• Before and after caring for someone who is sick

• Before and after treating a cut or wound

• After using the bathroom, changing diapers, or cleaning up a child.

• After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

• After touching an animal, animal food or treats, animal cages, or animal faeces (poop)

• After touching garbage

• If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

**Good handwashing (5 Simple steps)**

1. **Wet** hands under running water
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
3. **Rub** all surfaces of the hands for about 15-20 seconds. This is about the time you need to say the alphabet or to hum “happy birthday” twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** hands completely – moisture will transmit remaining bacteria.

**What type of soap should you use?**

You can use bar soap or liquid soap to wash your hands. Many public places provide liquid soap because it’s easier and cleaner to share with others. Studies have not found any added health benefit from using soaps containing antibacterial ingredients when compared with plain soap. Both are equally effective in getting rid of germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**If soap and water are not available?**

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol.

**When to use water and soap?**

• Before and after caring for someone who is sick

• Before and after treating a cut or wound

• After using the bathroom, changing diapers, or cleaning up a child who has used the bathroom

• After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

• After touching an animal, animal food or treats, animal cages, or animal waste

• After touching garbage

• If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

**Cite:**

<https://www.sandoz.com/stories/access-medical-information/washing-hands-saving-lives-surprising-health-benefits-clean-hands>

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