

## HAND-WASHING

Stay Healthy...Wash your Hands!

Washing your hands is so simple, yet in the United States, researchers have found, it's do as I say, not as I do. The American Society for Microbiology wanted to know how many people told the truth about their hand-washing habits. Volunteers called more than 1000 people across the country and asked if they always washed their hands after using a public restroom. Of course, of those surveyed, 95 percent said they did. These microbiologists decided to check it out. They observed people in public washrooms across the country and guess what? People did not always do what they said.

According to Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of hospital infectious programs at the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, "Your hands are the most important means from which germs travel from one person to another". Okay, that might be important for nurses and doctors but is hand-washing that important in everyday life? The most prevalent disease transmitted from person to person through hands is the common cold. Hepatitis A outbreaks occur when inadequate hand washing contaminates food. Shigella is a disease that causes diarrhea and cramping and can affect children in day care settings. One outbreak sickened 45 children and hospitalized three due to a failure in hand-washing

### Hand-Washing Makes a Difference

A recent study by the US Food and Drug Administration showed that children who washed their hands more were less likely to become sick. The study reported on 305 school children. Those who washed their hands 4 times a day had 24% fewer sick days due to respiratory illness like the flu, and 51% fewer days lost because of stomach upset.

### When Should I Wash My Hands?

Your hands are visibly dirty  
Your hands are visibly contaminated with blood or body fluids  
You just covered your cough or sneeze with your hands  
Before eating  
After using the restroom

## What Can We Do?

We need to create a culture where hand-washing is the thing to do. It starts in our homes and then continues in our schools, workplaces and in the general community. Hand-washing is so simple, yet it is the single most effective way to stay healthy! So wash away...

## How Should I Wash My Hands?

Wet hands first with water

Apply 3 to 5 ml of soap

Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds

Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers

Rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly

Use paper towel to turn off water faucet