
CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 4, 2016

Contact: DeShay Oliver, PIO
Cleveland County Health Department
980-484-5199
Deshay.oliver@clevelandcounty.com

Clean Hands Save Lives!

(Shelby, NC)—The Cleveland County Public Health Center would like to emphasize the importance of handwashing in reducing the spread of diarrheal and respiratory illnesses so you can stay healthy. As stated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), handwashing is like a "do-it-yourself" vaccine that involves five simple and effective steps: Wet, Lather, Scrub, Rinse, and Dry. Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene, especially before and after certain activities, is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before, during and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone that is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up after a child who has used the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

How should you wash your hands?

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

What should you do if you don't have soap and clean, running water?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs and might not remove harmful chemicals.

How do you use hand sanitizers?

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Persons with any diarrheal illness should always refrain from attending child care, school, or group activities, and should not participate in occupations involving food preparation or healthcare until their diarrhea has resolved. Routine and thorough handwashing and cleaning of surfaces in the above settings is important to limiting the spread of disease.

“Handwashing with soap and running water is the single most important preventive measure to remove germs, avoid getting sick, and prevent the spread of germs to others,” said Cleveland County Health Department spokesperson, DeShay Oliver. “Everyone should thoroughly wash their hands after using the restroom or changing diapers and before eating or preparing food. Handwashing is quick, simple, and it can keep us all from getting sick – it’s a win for everyone, except the germs.”

Whether you are at home, at work, traveling, or already sick, learn more about how good hand hygiene can protect you, your family, and others by visiting: <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>.

###