



**Handwashing Guidelines**  
**Excerpt from: Infectious Disease in School Settings;**  
**Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment**

Handwashing is one of the best tools for controlling the spread of infections. All students and staff should perform effective handwashing, which will reduce the amount of illness in schools.

**HANDWASHING TECHNIQUE**

- Use SOAP and warm RUNNING WATER.
- Rub hands vigorously as you wash them.
- Wash ALL surfaces including the backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails.
- Rinse hands well.
- Dry hands with a paper towel or air dryer.
- If using paper towels, turn off the water using a paper towel instead of bare hands.

State health regulations for schools require that soap and paper towels or air dryers be available in all bathroom facilities. Schools often have a problem keeping the restrooms stocked with soap and paper towels due to students playing with the items and clogging toilets or making messes. It is suggested that schools try to find solutions to these problems rather than removing soap and paper towels from the restrooms.

**WHEN TO WASH YOUR HANDS**

- After coughing, sneezing, wiping your nose, and cleaning up messes.
- After using the toilet.
- Before eating or drinking.
- After handling animals.
- Whenever hands are dirty.
- Food handlers should wash hands before handling food and when hands are soiled.
- Students who are unable to wash their own hands should have assistance from staff.

Sanitizing hand gels have increased in popularity. It is recommended that these products be used in addition to regular handwashing and not in place of handwashing. The district supports this position by allowing students and staff to bring the waterless antibacterial product or sanitizing wipes for personal use only. These items may not be shared with anyone else; nor does the district supply them except in situations where soap and water is not available (i.e. buses or field trips).

**TEACHING HANDWASHING**

Because students often learn by watching adults, it is important that school personnel use good handwashing technique. When young students are not washing their hands properly, it is necessary to show them proper technique in addition to telling them. It is also good to remind students that handwashing will stop the spread of germs that might cause illness.