

HAND HYGIENE AT SCHOOLS

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With children having returned to school after being isolated for two years, healthcare has reported higher than normal hospital visits and admissions for infants and young children. Any parent will tell you how stressful, and disruptive to one's work routine, having a sick child can be.

According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), washing hands at key times with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or using a hand sanitiser with at least 60 per cent alcohol if soap and water are not readily available, reduces absenteeism in school children due to gastrointestinal illnesses by up to as much as 57 per cent.

Educating our young ones on proper hand hygiene is the best way to prevent the spread of germs and viruses according to Children's Health, a network of pediatric specialists in the USA. There are fun ways to motivate children to adopt various handwashing methods to stay healthy.

WASH YOUR HANDS

FIRST THING - LAST THING

Soap contact while washing hands for 20 seconds following the 8 steps.

1

Lather hands, cover all areas.

2

Make a fist and turn it, washing the middle of each hand.

3

Put the fingers together in a point and wash in middle of hands.

4

Fold fingers together and wash bottom of fingers.

5

Place one hand on top of other and wash between fingers and back of hands, repeat other hand.

6

Wash the thumb inside and the top of the index finger.

7

Wash wrists.

8

Rinse hands under running water.

When should you wash your hands?

- Before and after eating
- Before and after play time
- Before and after going to the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching your pets

Tips to encourage healthy handwashing habits:

- Instructions should be placed at strategic points i.e., above basins or high traffic touch points.
- Make the instructions visible.
- Instructions should be easy to interpret.
- Use lots of pictures/graphics and do away with longwinded write-ups.
- Use fun, vibrant colours that attract attention.