

THE BENEFITS BEYOND HEALTH

Practicing good hand hygiene doesn't just help prevent illness—it also contributes to overall well-being. When you wash your hands, you're taking an active role in protecting others, especially vulnerable individuals such as the elderly, young children, and those with weakened immune systems. Additionally, good hygiene habits can prevent the spread of diseases at work, school, and in your community, promoting a healthier environment for everyone.

Hand hygiene is one of the simplest and most effective habits we can adopt to protect our health. By washing our hands at the right times and doing it properly, we reduce the risk of illness for ourselves and those around us. So, the next time you reach for a door handle or shake someone's hand, remember: a few extra seconds of care can go a long way in preventing sickness and promoting health. Let's all commit to better hand hygiene and make a positive impact on our communities.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and wash your hands!

If you have any questions on hand hygiene and other infection prevention and control practices, including keeping your vaccines up to date and appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) please ask staff for more information. More information is also available through the Niagara Region www.niagararegion.ca.

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ACCESSIBLE FORMATS & COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS

Special accessibility accommodations and materials in alternate formats can be arranged by contacting Brain Injury Community Re-entry (Niagara) Inc. at 905-687-6788 ext. 663 or www.bicr.org.

Disclaimer:

Brain Injury Community Re-Entry (Niagara) Inc. acknowledges funding support for many of our programs and services from the Ontario West HNHB and the government of Ontario.

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BRAIN INJURY COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY (NIAGARA) INC.



HAND HYGIENE: A SIMPLE YET
POWERFUL WAY TO STAY HEALTHY

Turning the key to
opportunity in Niagara
since 1988

In our daily lives, we interact with countless surfaces, objects, and people. While this is a normal part of life, it also means our hands can become carriers of harmful germs, bacteria, and viruses. One of the easiest, most effective ways to protect ourselves and others from illness is through proper hand hygiene. It's a simple habit that can make a world of difference in our health and well-being.

WHY HAND HYGIENE MATTERS

Hands are the most common way germs spread. Whether we touch a doorknob, shake hands, or prepare food, our hands often pick up harmful pathogens that can lead to infections. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), frequent handwashing can reduce the spread of respiratory and gastrointestinal infections by as much as 30%. This means that washing our hands regularly can significantly lower the chances of getting sick and help prevent the spread of illness to others.



WHEN TO WASH YOUR HANDS

Hand hygiene is most important at key times throughout the day. To ensure you're protecting yourself and those around you, wash your hands in the following situations:

- **Before eating:** Washing your hands before meals ensures that you don't transfer harmful germs to your food.
- **After using the restroom:** This is one of the most crucial times to wash your hands to remove any harmful bacteria.
- **After coughing, sneezing, or wiping your nose:** These actions can spread germs, so it's important to wash your hands afterward.
- **After touching shared surfaces:** This includes things like doorknobs, cell phones, or elevator buttons.
- **After caring for someone who is ill:** Handwashing reduces the risk of spreading illnesses to others.

COVER YOUR COUGH
Stop the spread of germs!

Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Throw your tissue in the waste basket.

OR

Cover your cough or sneeze with your interior elbow, not your hands.

Wash Your Hands

After coughing or sneezing, wash for 20 seconds with soap and warm water or clean with hand sanitizer

WHEN YOU CAN'T WASH, USE HAND SANITIZER

While washing your hands with soap and water is the most effective way to remove germs, there are times when soap and water may not be available. In these situations, using hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol can help reduce germs on your hands. However, hand sanitizer is not a substitute for handwashing, especially when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

Take the Time to Wash Your Hands
It's the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs

Wet hands with running water.

Apply soap and scrub for at least 20 seconds.

Focus on palms, backs of hands, wrists, between fingers and under nails.

Rinse thoroughly under running water.

Dry hands with a single use towel.

Use the towel to turn off the faucet.

No soap and water? Use hand sanitizer.

Apply enough product and rub all over hands until they're dry.

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Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety