Recommendations for Hand Washing in Elementary Schools

Frequent hand washing is the most important and the easiest way to prevent and control the spread of MRSA and other infectious diseases.

All hand washing is not equal. It takes a consistent and vigorous washing to remove the germs on our hands. Children need proper instruction in order to learn when to wash their hands and how to wash them effectively.

Hand washing correctly and frequently is the first step toward staying healthy and can help us avoid spreading and receiving germs.

What are Germs

Germs are microorganisms. There are many different types of germs (bacteria and viruses), some are good and some are bad. Germs are found almost everywhere and can live on almost any surface and even in the air.

How Germs Spread

The main way that illnesses like colds and flu spread is from person-to-person in respiratory droplets from coughs and sneezes. Germs can also spread by touching surfaces or objects contaminated with infectious material or touching someone’s infection.

When to Wash Your Hands

- Before and after eating.
- After using the toilet.
- After blowing or wiping your nose.
- After you cough or sneeze into a tissue.
- After playing outside or with shared toys.
- When hands are visibly dirty.
- Upon arriving home from school to prevent bringing germs from school into your home.
How to Properly Wash Your Hands

1. **WET** your hands with warm water.
2. **APPLY** plenty of soap to your wet hands.
3. **SCRUB** your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds. Wash the front and back of your hands, your finger tips, between your fingers and under your nails.
4. **RINSE** your hands with warm water.
5. **DRY** your hands with a clean paper towel.
6. **TURN OFF** the water using a paper towel.

**Teaching Ideas**

Consider using videos, demonstrations, games, stories, songs and other materials to reinforce the hand washing message. Please visit [http://www.tpchd.org/page.php?id=391](http://www.tpchd.org/page.php?id=391) to reserve hand washing materials, the “Sneeze” video and/or black light kit.

**Songs**

- *Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands*
  (Sung to “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”)

  Wash, wash, wash your hands  
  Wash them well today  
  Soap and water does the trick  
  It keeps the germs away!

- *I'm Gonna Wash Those Germs*
  (Sung to “I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Out of My Hair”)

  I'm gonna wash those germs right off of my hands,  
  I'm gonna wash those germs right off of my hands,  
  I'm gonna wash those germs right off of my hands,  
  And send them on their way!

- *Scrub, scrub, scrub your hands*
  Until they’re nice and clean  
  Down the drain go dirt and germs  
  Never to be seen.

  I'm gonna scrub those germs right off of my hands,  
  I'm gonna scrub those germs right off of my hands,  
  I'm gonna scrub those germs right off of my hands,  
  And send them down the drain!

- *This Is The Way We Wash Our Hands*
  (Sung to “Mulberry Bush”)

  This is the way we wash our hands,  
  Wash our hands  
  Wash our hands  
  This is the way we wash our hands,  
  To get them squeaky clean!
Hand Washing Resources

Hand Washing Curriculum

- Minnesota Department of Health Hand Washing Tool Kit. 
  http://www.health.state.mn.us/handhygiene/toolkit/index.html

- Hand washing lesson plans for kindergarten through 6th grade. 
  http://www.glogerm.com/worksheet.html


- Henry the Hand organization has interactive curriculum and countless hand washing tips and facts. http://www.henrythehand.com

- The Medicine Chest. Teaching children the importance of hand washing. 
  http://www.healthychild.net/articles/mc52handwash.html

Interactive Website

- NSF Scrub Club is an interactive website that teaches kids about proper hand washing. 
  http://www.scrubclub.org

Hand Washing Materials

- Brevis
  www.brevis.com
  1 800 383-3377
  Glitterbug™ UV View box, Glitterbug™ lotion, stickers, booklets, video tapes, posters, t-shirts.

- Glo Germ™
  www.glogerm.com
  1 800 842-6622
  Glo Germ oil, black light wand

- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
  Materials are available for free to Pierce County educators. Contact the Health Department at 253 798-6460 or reserved online at
  http://www.tpchd.org/page.php?id=391
  - Super Scrub and Bubbles activity booklets– grades K-2 & 3-5
  - Hand washing poster
  - Hand washing brochure
  - Hand washing activities – K- 5 (bingo, songs, word search, etc.)
  - UV light box & Glo Germ activity
  - “The Sneeze” video
• “The Sneeze: How Germs Are Spread”
  Running Time: 3 minutes
  Age: Kindergarten and up
  AIMS Multimedia
  9710 DeSoto Avenue
  Chatsworth, California 91311-4409
  1 800 367-2467
  This engaging computer animated demonstration of how germs are spread will make
  hand washing an unforgettable necessity in the minds of everyone who views it. The
  program opens with bacteria dividing inside of the mouth. We travel with them as they
  go to a party. After being sneezed onto the host’s hand, the germs get transferred to a
  doorknob and a donut. The germs are picked up on the hands of other unsuspecting
  party goers.

• Mobile Hand Washing Unit
  Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department has a portable hand washing trailer that
  can be reserved for a large event. Contact the Health Department at 253 798-6460 for
  availability.