

# HANDWASHING REFRESHER

## Keeping Germs at Bay

As August winds down, kids head back to classrooms, sports, and after-school programs and adults dive into busier schedules, too. With more people sharing spaces, handwashing becomes one of the simplest and most effective ways to stop the spread of germs. It only takes 20 seconds to protect yourself and others from illnesses that can spread quickly once fall begins.

### Why It Matters

- Germs from coughs, sneezes, shared surfaces, or playground equipment can easily move from hands to eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Proper handwashing reduces the risk of spreading colds, flu, stomach bugs, and other common infections.

### When to Wash

Make handwashing a habit at these key times:

- Before eating or handling food
- After using the bathroom
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- After recess, sports, or playing outside
- After touching shared surfaces like doorknobs, railings, or classroom supplies



### How to Wash Effectively

- Wet your hands with clean, running water.
- Lather with soap — cover palms, backs of hands, between fingers, and under nails.
- Scrub for at least 20 seconds — try humming “Happy Birthday” twice or another short song.
- Rinse well under clean water.
- Dry with a clean towel or air dryer.

### No Sink Nearby?

- Use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Rub all surfaces of your hands until they feel dry.
- Remember: sanitizer does not work well on visibly dirty or greasy hands, soap and water are best.

### Quick Tip for Families & Classrooms

Make handwashing fun for kids with songs, stickers, or setting up a “clean hands” challenge. The more positive the habit, the more likely it will stick.

**For more information on handwashing, please visit;**

[www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/about/index.html)



County of Morris  
Department of Law & Public Safety  
Division of Public Health  
P.O. Box 900  
Morristown, NJ 07963-0900  
(973) 631-5184



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