

Dear Family,

“Wash your hands before you eat!” You’ve spoken these words plenty of times, and it’s good advice. One way germs are spread is through hand contact, and the objects we handle the most every day are the dirtiest. Can you guess what they are?

If you guessed the toilet, you’re right. But get this: a kitchen sink may be even dirtier than a toilet! A kitchen sink can be crawling with bacteria from leftover food particles. Other germ-y items include remote controls, cell phones, computer keyboards, door handles, coins, and paper money—the list goes on and on.

Germs on your hands can enter your body through your eyes, mouth, and nose. What’s the first line of defense? Hand washing with soap and water! Clean hands are the best protection against colds, flu, food poisoning, and lots of other nasty infections.

Let’s work together to promote good hand hygiene, both at home and at school. Even though we teach kids about hand washing early, research shows they need to be reminded throughout their teenage years. Reinforcing this lesson will help them stay healthy for the rest of their lives.

Sincerely,

teacher



How to Wash

- **Wet** your hands under clean, running water.
- **Lather** up your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails with soap.
- **Scrub** for at least 20 seconds. Time yourself by singing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
- **Rinse** under clean, running water.
- **Dry** with a clean towel.



When to Wash

- Before eating
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or helping a younger child use the toilet
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- Before and after treating a cut
- After being around someone who’s sick
- After touching money
- After petting an animal or touching animal waste
- After touching anything that’s dirty, like garbage or soil

Fast Facts

- People wash their hands more in public restrooms than at home.
- “Fist bumping” spreads significantly fewer germs than either hand shaking or high-fiving.
- Every 3 minutes, a child brings his hand to his nose or mouth.
- Some viruses can survive on surfaces for up to 72 hours.
- Every year, nearly 22 million school days are lost due to the common cold.

