



December Health Awareness Month

Handwashing

Stay Healthy. Wash Often. Protect Each Other

Proper handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of seasonal illness, including colds, influenza, and other respiratory infections. Germs are easily transferred when touching shared surfaces, shaking hands, or using frequently touched items like personal mobile devices (i.e., phones).

When to Wash Your Hands

- Before eating or preparing food
- During care of someone sick
- After use of the restroom
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- After touching shared surfaces (e.g., door handles, phones, shopping carts)
- After handling garbage or cleaning

Fact: *“Proper handwashing could prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections.”*

Simple Steps for Effective Handwashing

1. Rinse hands (warm or cold)
2. Lather with soap (i.e., front, back, between fingers, and nails)
3. Scrub for 20 seconds (equivalent to humming “Happy Birthday” song twice)
4. Rinse hands
5. Dry with clean towel

PNPC Tip

If water and soap aren't available, use a hand sanitizer with at least **60% alcohol**, rubbing hands together until they feel dry.