



How to wash your hands properly: The coronavirus hand-washing technique explained, from the NHS poster to the best songs to sing

With the coronavirus continuing to spread, this is what the government's renewed public information campaign says about hand washing



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This is the latest hand washing advice from the NHS (Photo: Shutterstock)

The Government has launched a [renewed public information campaign](#) urging people to wash their hands to prevent the spread of [coronavirus](#).

- [What the symptoms of Covid-19 are, and what to do if you think you have it](#)
- [The government's action plan for dealing with the outbreak.](#)
- [Medical experts answer your questions](#)
- [Travel advice, if you've booked a trip, or are planning one](#)
- [Coronavirus latest: Follow our live-blog here](#)

This is what you need to know about how to wash your hands and how to dry them to help prevent further spread of the coronavirus.

How to wash your hands properly

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said: “We all have a role to play in spotting this disease and that’s what this expanded campaign is all about - making sure the public knows exactly what they should be doing to keep themselves and others safe.

“Washing hands regularly is the single most important thing that an individual can do.”

The poster from the government explains that you should use soap and water or hand sanitiser when you:

Get home or into work

Blow your nose, sneeze or cough

Eat or handle food

The NHS says that you should wash your hands with soap and water often, for a period of at least 20 seconds.

Start by applying enough soap to cover your hands, rub them together and remember to scrub the backs of your hands and in between your fingers on either hand.

The NHS says that for non-automated taps, you should use a disposable towel to turn off the tap to stop it running, instead of using your freshly cleaned hands.

Hand washing songs

To ensure you wash your hands for a full 20 seconds, the NHS advises singing Happy Birthday twice in your head (or out loud if you prefer), which takes roughly 20 seconds.

Or if you’re not keen on Happy Birthday, journalist Jen Monnier compiled a thread on Twitter of other songs with choruses that last 20 seconds. These include:

- Jolene by Dolly Parton
- Africa by Toto
- Truth Hurts by Lizzo
- Landslide by Fleetwood Mac
- Raspberry Beret by Prince

For keeping kids entertained whilst washing their hands, there are a variety of songs you can choose to sing along with them, such as:

- Mary had a little lamb
- If you’re happy and you know it
- Row, row, row your boat
- The alphabet song

Paper towels versus hand dryers

When it comes to using a hand dryer or paper towels, the World Health Organisation (WHO) says that hand dryers are not effective at killing the new coronavirus.

“Hand dryers are not effective in killing the 2019-nCoV,” WHO states in their Myth Busters advice for the public report.

The NHS advises drying your hands thoroughly using paper towels after washing your hands.

Does hand sanitiser do anything?

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that, in the case that soap and water are not readily available, you can use hand sanitiser instead.

Make sure the hand sanitiser is at least 60 percent alcohol.