

## Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Read our pages on [coronavirus](#) for health information and advice. See the [government response to coronavirus on GOV.UK](#).

# How to wash your hands

## Healthy body

Body

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Head

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Seasonal health

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Self-help tips

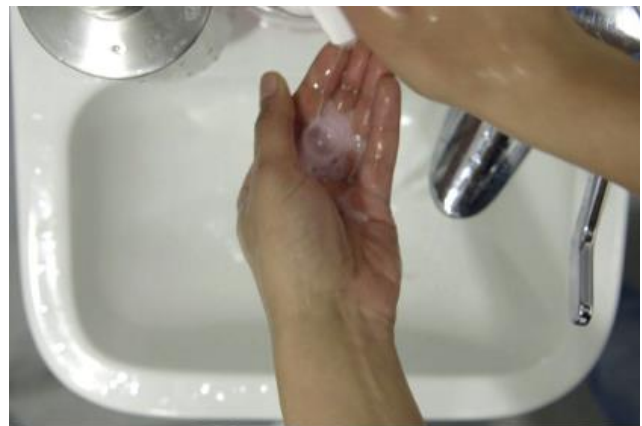
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Washing your hands is one of the easiest ways to protect yourself and others from illnesses such as food poisoning and flu.

You should wash your hands for the amount of time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice (around 20 seconds):



1. Wet your hands with water.



2. Apply enough soap to cover your hands.



3. Rub your hands together.



4. Use 1 hand to rub the back of the other hand and clean in between the fingers. Do the same with the other hand.



5. Rub your hands together and clean in between your fingers.



6. Rub the back of your fingers against your palms.



7. Rub your thumb using your other hand. Do the same with the other thumb.



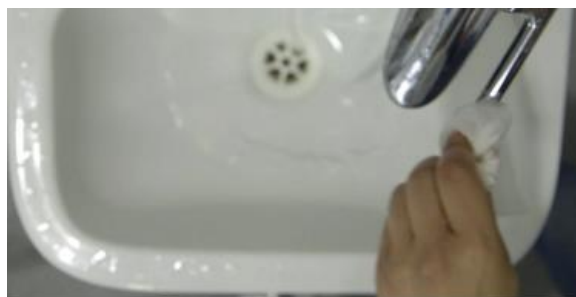
8. Rub the tips of your fingers on the palm of your other hand. Do the same with other hand.



9. Rinse your hands with water.



10. Dry your hands completely with a disposable towel.



11. Use the disposable towel to turn off the tap.

If you do not have immediate access to soap and water then use alcohol-based handrub if available.

### **When should you wash your hands?**

You should wash your hands:

- after using the toilet or changing a nappy
- before and after handling raw foods like meat and vegetables
- before eating or handling food
- after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing
- before and after treating a cut or wound
- after touching animals, including pets, their food and after cleaning their cages

Washing your hands properly removes dirt, viruses and bacteria to stop them spreading to other people and objects, which can spread illnesses such as food poisoning, flu or diarrhoea.

It can help stop people picking up infections and spreading them to others.

It can also help stop spreading infections when you're visiting someone in hospital or another healthcare setting.