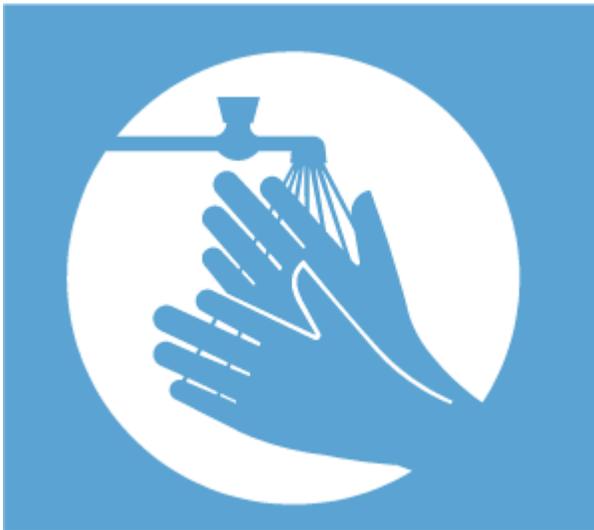


WORDS ABOUT WELLNESS

Today's "Words About Wellness" is brought to you by:
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WASH YOUR HANDS, WASH YOUR HANDS, WASH YOUR HANDS AGAIN



Hi Everyone,

By the time you read this newsletter, I and several other faculty and resident members of the department will have left the friendly (and currently COVID-19 free) confines of Chapel Hill to attend the 2020 National Conference for the Association of Academic Physiatrists taking place in Orlando this year. With the recent spread of COVID-19 across the United States, it's likely that there will be someone in Orlando carrying this novel Coronavirus, either on the plane, at the hotel, or spending time with their families in the nearby Orlando theme parks.

So what can we who are in Orlando and the rest of us back in Chapel Hill do to best reduce our chance of catching this virus? As I tell the parents of my patients, my friends with young children and anyone else worried about viral infections, the best things to do are to avoid being near someone who is sneezing, don't kiss someone with a runny nose (even though you love them!) and wash your hands, wash your hands, and wash your hands again.

So what's the best way to wash one's hands?

Here are a few of the recommendations I gleaned from the Center for Disease Control that can be found at [cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) (accessed 03/03/2020)

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before and after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **Before and after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

*NOTE – As a pediatrician, I generally favor humming (or singing) the birthday song twice in a row.

Back to the CDC’s advice:

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do **not** get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

How to use hand sanitizer

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
 - Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

A final note

If you yourself are sick, please take a sick day off to reduce the risk of spreading something to your co-workers. And for those who are not sick, at the moment the best things we can all do to stay well is to avoid those who are sick (if possible), practice good hygiene, and, you guessed it, wash your hands, wash your hands, and wash your hands again.

Be Well,

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