



## THE IMPORTANCE OF HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene is often overlooked but is one of the simplest yet most effective ways to prevent the spread of infections and maintain good health. **Our hands come into contact with countless surfaces every day, picking up germs, bacteria and viruses that can easily enter the body through the mouth, nose or eyes.**

**Proper hand hygiene** helps protect not only individuals but also families and communities. Washing hands regularly with soap and water removes harmful microorganisms that may cause illnesses such as the common cold, flu, food poisoning, diarrhoea and other infections. In healthcare, proper hand hygiene is especially critical as it reduces the risk of transmitting infections between patients and healthcare workers. It is considered one of the most important measures for patient safety.

Good hand hygiene became even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic, reminding people worldwide of how quickly infections can spread through contact.

Hands should be washed thoroughly before eating or preparing food, after using the toilet, after coughing or sneezing, after touching garbage and after returning home from public places. The correct method involves washing with soap and clean water for at least 20 seconds, ensuring that all parts of the hands, including between the fingers and under the nails, are cleaned properly. When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitisers can be used as an alternative.



**Children should be taught hand hygiene habits from an early age.** This helps create lifelong healthy practices and reduces the spread of infections in schools and homes. Employers and institutions should also encourage hand hygiene by providing easy access to handwashing stations.

Neglecting hand hygiene can lead to frequent illnesses, increased healthcare costs and the rapid spread of infections in communities.

**Hand hygiene is truly a small habit with a major impact. It is an easy, affordable and highly effective way to protect health and prevent disease transmission. Indeed, proper handwashing should be a regular part of daily life for individuals.**