# Fact Sheet on handwashing

Washing hands is the first line of defense against diseases and infections such as diarrhoea, cholera and dysentery, typhoid, etc.

**1. Why should we wash our hands?**

Handwashing prevents and interrupts the transmission of disease. Hands often act as vectors that carry disease-causing pathogens from person to person, either through direct contact or indirectly via surfaces. When not washed, hands that have been in contact with human or animal faeces, bodily fluids such as nasal excretions, and contaminated foods or water can transport bacteria, viruses and parasites to unwitting hosts.

We generally wash our hand to;

protect ourselves ,children and families from various infections
prevent the spread of diseases
prolong our lives and to maintain a healthy lifestyle

**2. Why do we need to use soap when we wash our hands?**

Most people believe that washing their hands with water is enough because it removes visible dirt. But washing hands with water alone is insignificantly less effective than washing hands with soap in terms of removing germs. Using soap breaks the grease and dirt that carry germs by facilitating the rubbing and friction that dislodge them and leaves hands smelling pleasant.

**3. There are many kinds of soaps available, how do we know which soap is more effective?**

With proper use, all soaps are equally effective at rinsing away the germs that cause diseases.

**4. When should you wash your hands?**

Wash our hands: After using the toilet
After changing babies nappies
After handling waste
After handling meat
Before preparing food

And, always wash your hands before feeding your baby, eating and after touching your hair, coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.

**5. How do we wash our hands? (Technique of washing hands)**

Wet hands thoroughly and use soap
Rub palms together to scrub
Rub in between fingers
Rub the back of your hand
Brush underneath your nails
Wash your wrist
Rinse hands thoroughly with water and dry with a clean towel

We all have a responsibility towards our own health. Let's all do the right thing and stay healthy.

## CLEAN HANDS SAVE LIVES!

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