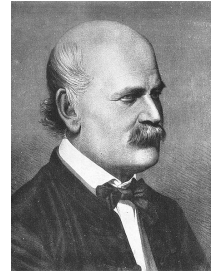


# Good Hand Hygiene Prevents Infection

You've probably heard it said many times, but that doesn't make it any less true. Good hand hygiene may be one of the most effective things you can do to prevent the spread of infection. And it's one of the most important things you can teach your kids.

In 1847, a Hungarian doctor named Ignaz Semmelweis discovered that "childbed fever", an obstetrical infection that caused many deaths following childbirth, could be dramatically reduced by hand cleaning. Unfortunately, it took many years and subsequent work on germ theory by Louis Pasteur and Joseph Lister (Yes, that's where the name *Listerine* comes from!) before his practices were widely adopted in medicine. Now they are the foundation of modern infection control.



The key to good hand hygiene is making it routine throughout the day, so that you don't have to think about it and you don't have to remember it. Teach children to wash hands:

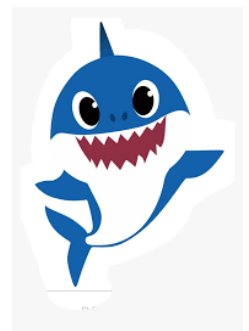
- Before eating, snacks included
- After visiting the bathroom (#1 and #2)
- Playing outside
- Touching animals
- After sneezing or coughing or touching used tissues

Equally important, but often far more difficult, is teaching children to keep their hands away from their eyes, nose and mouth, which is ultimately how so many infections are transmitted. That is why we focus on hand hygiene. Kids are much less likely to give themselves pink eye after washing their hands!

## Good Hand Washing Tips

- 1) Use clean, running water. Hot/cold does not make a big difference.
- 2) Apply soap and vigorously rub hands together for 20 seconds. Really. 20 seconds.
- 3) Rinse them and dry them with a clean or disposable towel. Antibacterial soap is not necessary.
- 4) Alcohol based sanitizer is a reasonable substitute to prevent infection when water is unavailable and the hands are not visibly soiled

How long is 20 seconds? Well most often we say twice through Happy Birthday will do. As an alternative, two verses of "Baby Shark" will work, as will the first verse and chorus of "My Girl" by the Temptations. (I checked.)



## Happy Hand Washing!

For more info, look here: [CDC: Show me the Science](#)