News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Did you wash your hands?

"Did you wash your hands?" This is a common question we ask our children but it should be something that children and adults do on a regular basis. Handwashing is the simplest thing that we can do to prevent the spread of germs and keep everyone healthy. Think of it as a “do-it-yourself” vaccine. Your hands come in contact with many things throughout the day, from the telephone, blowing your nose with a tissue, shaking hands, using the toilet and digging in the dirt. These are all opportunities for germs to get on your hand and washing your hands is the best way to stop those germs from spreading.

There are certain times that are important to wash your hands: when your hands are dirty, before eating or touching food, after using the bathroom, after touching pets or other animals, after blowing your nose or coughing or sneezing, after changing a baby’s diaper, after playing or working outside, after handling garbage, before and after cleaning a cut or wound, before and after visiting a sick relative or friend.

Washing your hands involves five simple steps. Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply soap. Rub your hands together to make a lather. Scrub well for at least 20 seconds (hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice). Be sure to clean your wrists, back of your hands, between your fingers and under your fingernails where germs can hide. Rinse your hands under running water. Dry with a clean towel or air-dry. You can use the towel to turn off the water and open the door to prevent exposing your clean hands to new germs.

Hand sanitizers can be used if soap and water are not available. These are easy to carry with you in your backpack, purse, car and suitcase. These products can
help reduce the number of germs on your hands, but they do not get rid of all
types of germs like handwashing does. When you use a hand sanitizer, put a
small amount on your palm and rub your hands and fingers together until they
are dry.

Washing hands are important in preventing the spread of flu and colds during the
winter months. It also helps prevent your risk of catching or spreading bacteria
that can cause food poisoning. This is especially important when handling raw
poultry, eggs, meat or seafood. Proper handwashing reduces your risk of
catching or spreading infectious diseases like salmonella and Hepatitis A.

Handwashing is a simple thing that is important to stay healthy. So the question,
“did you wash your hands?” is something we need to ask everyone: our family,
friends and co-workers.