

When to wash your hands

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Be sure to wash your hands:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- 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 or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

Did you know?

Studies have shown that human influenza viruses generally can live on hard surfaces like books and door-knobs from 2 to 8 hours.

More information

About handwashing:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/handwashing

About flu protection:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits/

Is it cold or flu?

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/coldflu.htm



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Habits for Health



A public health guide

Healthy habits can protect everyone from getting germs or spreading germs at home, work, or school.



**Lewis & Clark
Public Health**

Get vaccinated

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season. The Health Department offers flu shots during its regular walk-in immunization clinics.

Immunization Clinics

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays

11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

1930 Ninth Avenue, Helena

No appointment is needed. Immunizations are provided on a sliding-fee scale for those who qualify, and we bill all insurance providers.

During flu season, the health department offers flu shot clinics in publicized locations around Lewis and Clark County, including in Augusta, East Helena, Lincoln, and Wolf Creek.

Adopt good health habits

Avoid close contact.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you're sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.

Stay home when you're sick.

If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you're sick. You'll help prevent others from catching your illness.



Cover your mouth and nose.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.

To help stop the spread of germs:

- Put used tissues in the waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes or nose.

Clean and disinfect surfaces or objects.

Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu can help slow the spread of disease.

Wash hands often

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Wash your hands the right way.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Use hand sanitizers.

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.

Hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but they don't eliminate all types of germs.

Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty.