

# GERMS & HANDWASHING

Illnesses like the flu (influenza) and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat and lungs. The flu and colds usually spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

## How to Help Stop the Spread of Germs:



- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.
- ✓ Clean your hands often.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- ✓ Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away.
- ✓ If you do not have a tissue try to cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow instead of your hand.
- ✓ Clean your hands every time you cough or sneeze.
- ✓ Stay home when you are sick and check in with a health care provider when needed.

## When to Wash Your Hands

### Always wash your hands BEFORE:

- Preparing food
- Eating
- Treating wounds or giving medicine
- Touching a sick or injured person
- Inserting or removing contact lenses

### Always wash your hands AFTER:

- Preparing food, especially raw meat or poultry
- Using the toilet
- Changing a diaper
- Touching an animal or animal toys, leashes or waste
- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Treating wounds



## Wash Your Hands the Right Way

- ✓ Wet your hands with clean running water. Apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- ✓ Rub hands together to make lather and scrub all of the surfaces on your hands.
- ✓ Continue rubbing your hands together for 15-20 seconds. This is the amount of time that it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song two times.
- ✓ Rinse hands well under running water.
- ✓ Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- ✓ Always use soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
- If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand gel to clean your hands. Alcohol-based gels significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast-acting.
  - Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:
    - Apply product to the palm of one hand.
    - Rub hands together.
    - Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until hands are dry. If your hands are dry in less than 10 seconds then you did **not** use enough product.