



**Public Health**  
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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **April Showers Bring May Flowers and the Need for Hand Washing**

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urges the Public to Wash  
Their Hands Often to Prevent the Spread of Disease*

Champaign, IL – Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to keep from getting sick and spreading illnesses. Cleaning your hands gets rid of many germs that are picked up from other people, touchable surfaces and animals. Teaching the importance of proper hand washing, as well as, frequent, supervised hand washing by adults for all young children should be encouraged. If soap and water are not available, the use of an alcohol based wipe or hand gel is recommended.

Proper hand washing should include the following steps:

- Wet your hands and apply soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously to lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue washing for 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday”- twice!).
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a single use paper towel or air dryer.
- If possible, use the paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the bathroom door to avoid contaminating your clean hands.

Hand washing is an important step to good health. Children are particularly susceptible to picking up germs and bacteria. They can unknowingly become infected simply by touching infected objects or surfaces. An infected child or adult can easily spread the disease among other family members.

Good hand washing is your first line of defense against the spread of many illnesses, not just the common cold. For example, many types of infectious gastroenteritis are spread person- to person via fecal-oral route by improper hand washing technique.

To minimize the germs passed around your family, make frequent hand washing a rule for everyone, especially:

- before eating and cooking
- after using the bathroom
- after cleaning around the house
- after touching animals, including family pets
- after visiting or taking care of any sick friends or relatives
- after blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
- after being outside (playing, gardening, walking the dog, etc.)

Don't underestimate the power of hand washing! The few seconds you spend at the sink could save you a costly trip to the doctor's office.

For more information, please contact CUPHD, Division of Infectious Disease Prevention & Management, (217) 531-5361 or visit our website at [www.cuphd.org](http://www.cuphd.org).

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