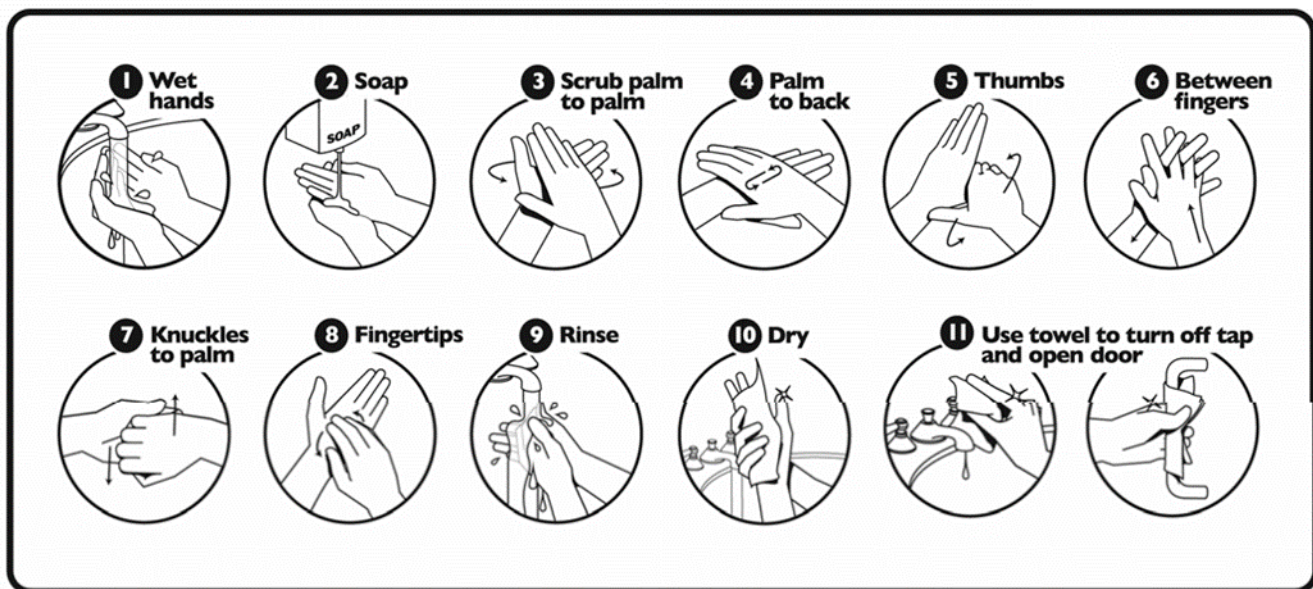


Did you know?

- 80% of infectious diseases are spread through contaminated surfaces and hands.
- Handwashing is the most important thing you can do to prevent illness and the spread of germs at home and at school.
- Improved hand washing can reduce student sick days from respiratory illness like colds and flu by as much as 21%, and sick days from stomach illness by as much as 31%.¹



Use soap, scrub for at least 15 seconds, rinse and dry hands well. These steps all work together to remove germs.



Wash hands several times per day, especially:

- After using the washroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing into your hands
- After using shared objects such as keyboards and telephones
- After handling the garbage and other waste
- Before and after preparing or eating food
- Before and after helping people who are sick
- Before and after attending to cuts, scrapes burns or other breaks in the skin
- After contact with bodily fluids such as blood, sputum, vomit, urine or feces
- When hands are visibly dirty



What else can you do to prevent illness?

- Use hand sanitizer when washing with soap and water is not possible.
- Ensure hand sanitizer remains wet on hands for at least 15 seconds and contains at least 60% alcohol as the active ingredient.
- Keep your hands away from your face. Germs can be spread when you touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you sneeze or cough. This avoids spreading germs into the air or onto your hands and surfaces.
- Stay home when you are sick. Going to school or work when you are sick can spread germs to others.
- Clean commonly touched surfaces often, such as doorknobs, washrooms, sink taps, telephones and computer keyboards.

Learn more at: www.germsmart.ca



References:

1. Aiello, A., Coulborn, R., Perez, V., & Larson, E. (2008). Effect of hand hygiene on infectious disease risk in the community setting: A meta-analysis. *American Journal of Public Health, 98*(8), 1372-1381.

Note: Images courtesy of SHA Creative Services Team

