



April 20, 2020

COVID – 19 (Coronavirus) – TOOLBOX TALK **Importance of Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer use**

Germs are everywhere. They can get onto hands and items we touch during daily activities and make you sick. Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water or hand sanitizer is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to those around you. This is important for all illnesses, but especially important for controlling the spread of COVID-19.

There are important differences between washing hands with soap and water and cleaning them with hand sanitizer. For example, alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't kill ALL types of germs, such as a stomach bug called norovirus, some parasites, and *Clostridium difficile*, which causes severe diarrhea. Hand sanitizers also may not remove harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and heavy metals like lead. Handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs, pesticides, and metals on hands. Knowing when to clean your hands and which method to use will give you the best chance of preventing sickness.

When should I use?

Soap and Water:

- 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 bathroom, changing diapers, or cleaning up a child who has used the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal food or treats, animal cages, or animal waste
- After touching garbage
- If your hands are visibly dirty or greasy

Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer:

- Before and after visiting a friend or a loved one in a hospital or nursing home, unless the person is sick with *Clostridium difficile* (If so, use soap and water to wash hands).



- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and wash with soap and water as soon as you can.
- Do NOT use hand sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty or greasy; for example, after gardening, playing outdoors, or after fishing or camping (unless a handwashing station is not available). Wash your hands with soap and water instead.

How should I use?

Soap and Water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
- Scrub all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for 20 seconds.
- Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Supervise young children when they use hand sanitizer to prevent swallowing alcohol, especially in schools and childcare facilities.
- Apply – Put enough product on hands to cover all surfaces.
- Rub hands together until hands feel dry. This should take about 20 seconds.
- Do not rinse or wipe off the hand sanitizer before it's dry; it may not work as well against germs.

Who attended: _____

