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Hand Hygiene

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Supervising Safety Newsletter

What is Hand Hygiene?

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Proper hand hygiene means cleaning one's hands by washing with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Washing hands can help keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and other serious infections. Germs can spread from person to person and can live on surfaces that you may encounter throughout your workday. People frequently touch their eyes, nose, and mouth without even realizing it is spreading germs that cause illness. Some germs can grow rapidly in certain conditions found in foods and drinks, multiplying their ability to make people sick. Germs from unwashed hands are easily transferred to objects that we use daily like handrails, countertops, door handles, another person's hands, and other surfaces. Removing germs through handwashing helps prevent diarrhea and respiratory infections and may even help prevent skin and eye infections.

Proper Hand Washing

Washing our hands is the easiest and most effective method to prevent the spread of germs. By simply cleaning our hands we can stop the spread of germs from person-to-person in the workplace, home, and community.

Washing hands can be summed up in a few easy steps. First, wet hands, apply soap, and lather by rubbing your hands together. Make sure to wash the backs of hands, between the fingers, and under fingernails. This lathering or scrubbing should take a minimum of 20 seconds to complete. Finally, rinse hands in clean running water and dry them using clean towels.

When to Wash Hands

- After using the bathroom.
- Before, during, and after food preparation.
- Before eating.

- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick.
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet.
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste.
- After touching garbage.

Hand sanitizer should be used when you do not have access to soap and water to wash your hands. Hand sanitizer works by quickly reducing the number of germs on the hands, but does not get rid of all types of germs. Hand sanitizer is not effective at cleaning heavily soiled or greasy hands and may not remove harmful chemicals. When choosing a hand sanitizer be sure to pick one that contains 60% alcohol to be the most effective. Hand sanitizer should be applied to the hands covering all surfaces and rubbed together until they are dry.

Studies have shown that by simply washing your hands or using hand sanitizer can prevent one in five respiratory infections, such as the cold or the flu, and one in three diarrhea-related sicknesses.

Hand sanitizer is currently available at multiple locations around the plant site. Personal bottles of hand sanitizer can be picked up from the Fish Bowl and old bottles can be refilled. Let's try to reduce the spread of germs that cause the cold and flu this season by washing our hands and keeping our co-workers and families healthy.

