

# Clean hands, healthy life



Amid the ongoing COVID-19 spread, washing your hand remains one of the most vital ways of protecting yourself. But, is there a right way of maintaining proper hand hygiene? In this mailer, we answer the most commonly asked questions for you.

# 1. Are antimicrobial soaps better than regular soaps for killing germs?

Antimicrobial soaps could be slightly more effective in removing germs than regular soaps due to some extra ingredients. However, there isn't enough science to show that they are definitely better at preventing infections in comparison to regular soaps, as per the Food and Drug Administration.<sup>[1]</sup>



## 2. Is hot water more effective for handwashing than cold water?

As per Food and Drug Administration, warm water is more effective for handwashing than cold water as it enhances lather formation with soap and effectively removes oil from the hand that can harbor germs.<sup>[2]</sup>



It was previously stated by the FDA that hot water comfortable enough for washing hands is not hot enough to kill bacteria, but is more effective than cold water. However, as per some new research, cold water might do the trick just as well as hot water.<sup>[3]</sup>

### 3. How often should you wash your hands?

There's no defined frequency; it would largely depend on your activities. Must-wash occasions include after using the bathroom, before eating or preparing food, receiving and handling home delivery

packages, and caring for someone who is sick, particularly if he or she has a respiratory or gastrointestinal infection. In general, experts advise to wash your hands every 4-5 hours, especially when visibly dirty.



## 4. Which is better for killing germs: soaps or sanitizers?

Soap and water are more effective than hand sanitizers, especially at removing certain kinds of germs as well as chemicals.<sup>[4]</sup> For best hand hygiene practices, you should use sanitizers in the right

situations. Keep alcohol-based hand sanitizer handy at all times if soap and water are not readily available. DO NOT use hand sanitizer if your hands are visibly dirty or greasy—for example, after gardening and playing outdoors.



## References:

1. <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/antibacterial-soap-you-can-skip-it-use-plain-soap-and-water>
2. <https://www.fda.gov/media/87140/download>
3. Journal of Food Protection. (2017) 80 (6): 1022–1031.
4. Hand sanitizer use out and about by CDC.