
HEALTH REPORT

Staying Healthy by Washing Your Hands

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Experts have found that greater use of soap and water could save a million lives a year by reducing the spread of infections. Transcript of radio broadcast:

This is the VOA Special English Health Report.

Hand washing is a powerful way to prevent the spread of disease.

The World Bank, the United Nations and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine did a study to urge hand washing around the world. They found that one million lives could be saved each year if people washed their hands with soap often. They said that programs to increase hand washing with soap could be among the most effective ways to reduce infectious disease.

Doctors say many diseases can be prevented from spreading by hand washing. These include pinworms, influenza, the common cold, hepatitis A, meningitis and infectious diarrhea.

Hand washing destroys germs from other people, animals or objects a person has touched. When people get bacteria on their hands, they can infect themselves by touching their eyes, nose or mouth. Then these people can infect other people.

The experts say the easiest way to catch a cold is to touch your nose or eyes after someone nearby has sneezed or coughed. Another way to become sick is to eat food prepared by someone whose hands were not clean.

The experts say that hand washing is especially important before and after preparing food, before eating and after using the toilet. People should wash their hands after handling animals or animal waste, and after cleaning a baby. The experts say it is also a good idea to wash your hands after handling money and

after sneezing or coughing. And it is important to wash your hands often when someone in your home is sick.

The experts say the most effective way to wash your hands is to rub them together while using soap and warm water. They say you do not have to use special antibacterial soap. Be sure to rub all areas of the hands for about ten to fifteen seconds. The rubbing action helps remove germs. Then rinse the hands with water and dry them.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are rubbed into the hands and do not require soap and water. Experts say these products must contain at least sixty percent alcohol to be effective in killing most bacteria and viruses.

Experts also say that people who use public bathrooms and dry their hands with a paper towel should use the towel to turn off the water. Then, before throwing it away, use the same paper to open the bathroom door.

And that's the VOA Special English Health Report, written by Nancy Steinbach. For more news and information about health, go to voaspecialenglish.com. I'm Steve Ember.
