

To reduce the risk of transmission of infectious disease, like the coronavirus, maintaining optimal general personal hygiene practices, especially while at work, is important.

A significant portion of people with coronavirus lack symptoms (“asymptomatic”) and even those who eventually develop symptoms (“pre-symptomatic”) can transmit the virus to others before they start showing symptoms.

- This means the virus can spread between people interacting in close proximity – for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing – even if those people are not showing symptoms.
- It may also be possible to get the virus after touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching your own mouth or nose.

Everyone has a role in making sure the area where they work remains as safe as possible to prevent the transmission of illnesses. Reducing the risk of exposure to coronavirus by maintaining a high standard for personal hygiene is a critical component of ensuring that work can continue safely.

Stay home if you are sick. Employees who begin to develop symptoms or feel ill during the course of the work day should separate themselves from the work environment immediately and contact their supervisor.

*This safety topic is not suitable for those in the healthcare or other fields who may have a higher level of exposure or require a higher level of protection.*



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General hygiene practices to observe throughout the work day include:

- Avoid touching your nose, mouth and eyes.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues into a lined or no-touch trash can.
- Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- Avoid shaking hands and always wash your hands after physical contact with others.
- If wearing gloves or a face mask, always wash your hands after removing them.
- Keep frequently touched common work surfaces clean.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If sharing is unavoidable, clean and disinfect items before and after use.
- Consider discontinuing the use of personal cooling fans in the workplace to reduce the potential spread of any airborne viruses.

Germs, including viruses, can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects



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Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of infections from one person to the next.

Key times to wash or clean your hands include:

- Before and after work shifts and work breaks
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After using the restroom
- Before and after eating or preparing food
- After putting on, touching, or removing face masks or gloves
- After touching garbage
- After touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth



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**Handwashing** is one of the best ways to protect yourself from getting sick.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- If your hands are visibly dirty, washing with soap and water is better than using hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.



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Follow these five steps every time you wash your hands.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

Follow these steps every time you use hand sanitizer.

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.



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