

Gloucester City Council

Environmental Health Factsheet

Handwashing

Why Wash Hands?

Many bacteria and viruses which cause sickness and diarrhoea can be picked up on the hands and fingers, especially when using the toilet. They can be passed from one person to another via the toilet flushing handle, the taps or a shared towel or flannel.

If these germs are taken into the mouth, either directly from the fingers, or on food and drink, they can cause illnesses like hepatitis A, dysentery and food poisoning.

Thorough hand washing with soap and thorough hand drying will remove the bacteria and viruses from your hands. However, water alone will not, and may allow the infection to spread.

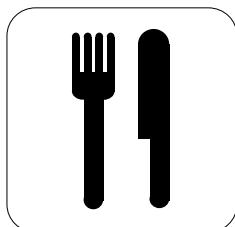
Young children are more at risk from these illnesses because they do not understand the importance of good hygiene and often forget to wash their hands at the right times. They are also likely to put objects into their mouth or suck their fingers.

When?

Parents can help to prevent such illnesses by making sure their whole family wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, and dry them on a clean towel.

The most important times to wash your hands are:-

**BEFORE
EATING OR
DRINKING**



**AFTER USING
THE TOILET**



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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**GLOUCESTER
CITY COUNCIL**

**AFTER
STROKING
PETS**

**AFTER DOING
THE WASHING**

If somebody at home is ill with diarrhoea:-

- ensure they have their own towel and flannel
- disinfect the taps, toilet flushing handle and toilet seat after they have used it
- do not go to work or school whilst suffering from diarrhoea; you may spread it to others
- avoid making food for other people if you are the one who is ill