Horrid Hands

See how by washing your hands thoroughly, the bacteria is removed.

Bacteria on a hand after using the toilet and before washing hands.

Bacteria on a hand after handling raw meat.

Bacteria on a hand after touching an old dishcloth.

Bacteria on a hand after handling a raw chicken.

Notice how people often miss their thumbs when washing hands.

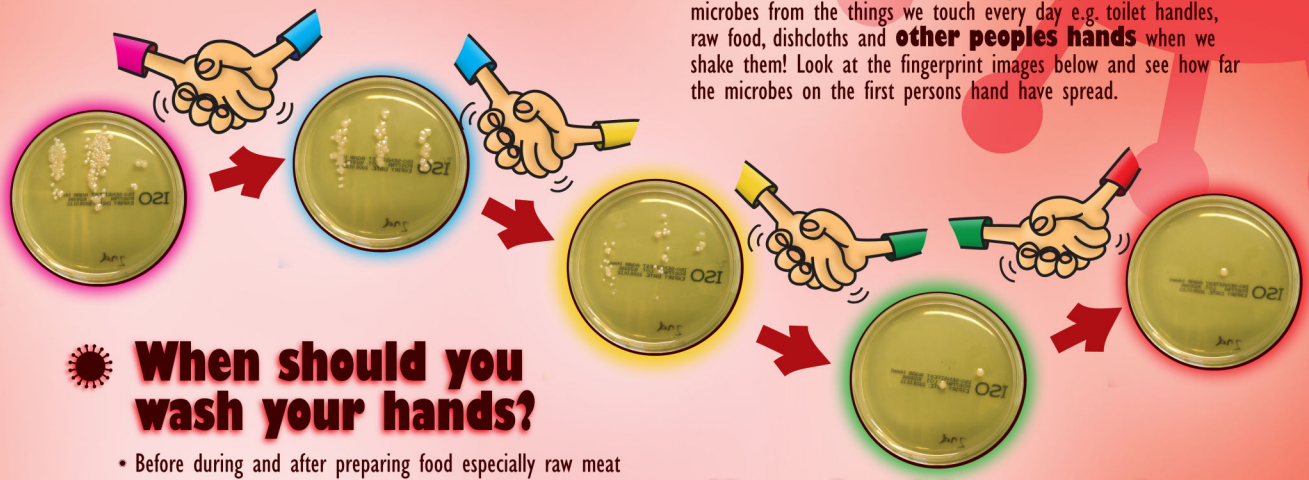
Images © Food and Drink Federation (foodlink - www.foodlink.org.uk).

Microbes spread easily through coughs and sneezes, food and water, animals and touch. Every day thousands of microbes get onto our hands from the things we touch and we transfer these microbes onto other places or people.

Washing your hands is the best tactic to stop the spread of any harmful microbes and preventing people getting ill. Although washing hands in water alone, or in cold water eliminates visible dirt, soap is required to break up the oil on the surface of the hands that can trap microbes.

What's in a hand shake?

Most microbes on our hands are harmless or even good for our skin. Sometimes however, we can pick up potentially harmful microbes from the things we touch every day e.g. toilet handles, raw food, dishcloths and **other peoples hands** when we shake them! Look at the fingerprint images below and see how far the microbes on the first persons hand have spread.



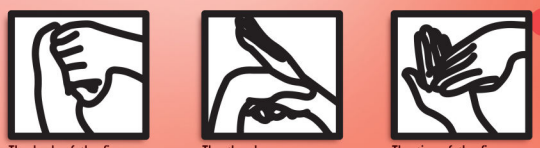
When should you wash your hands?

- Before during and after preparing food especially raw meat
- After using the toilet.
- After exposure to animals or animal waste.
- After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
- If you're ill or have been around ill people.

How should you wash your hands?

How we wash our hands is just as important as when we wash them, especially when it comes to eliminating harmful microbes. We don't need any special cleaners or cleaning equipment – just soap and water.

Palm to palm | The back of the hands | Inbetween the fingers



The back of the fingers | The thumbs | The tips of the fingers.

Why wash your hands?

- To remove germs from your hands and environment.
- To reduce the occurrence of infections for yourself and others.
- To help prevent the spread of infection

Facts on hand hygiene

- In 1847, Dr Ignaz Semmelweiz demonstrated that that hand washing could prevent infection.
- According to CDC, the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to clean our hands.
- Nearly 22 million school days are lost due to the common cold alone.
- Some viruses and bacteria can live from 20 minutes up to 2 hours or more on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs, and desks.
- Proper hand hygiene demonstrated by 'people in charge' has been shown to positively influence others' compliance by up to 70%.

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