Quality Care For Kids Newsletter

December 2023 | National Handwashing Awareness Week – December 3-9
Written by Heidi Hotvedt, RN BSN, Healthy Child Care Iowa Program Coordinator

We touch multiple surfaces throughout each day. Germs on surfaces can easily be transferred on our hands. We can infect ourselves with these germs by touching our faces, eyes, noses and mouths. We can also spread these germs by touching another person or surface. Although it's impossible to be completely germ-free, simply washing our hands can help reduce the transfer of germs. Research has shown that handwashing can prevent about 30% of diarrhea-related illnesses and about 20% of respiratory infections.

What are the important times to wash hands?
- When you get to child care
- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating
- Before and after administering first aid or caring for someone who is sick
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After touching an animal, animal food or treats, or animal waste
- After touching garbage
- After using sanitizing/disinfecting products
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- When your hands are visibly dirty
- If soap and water are not available, it is okay to use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer should not be used by children younger than 24 months.

Handwashing posters with pictures of each step can be found on the NEW HHS Website

https://hhs.iowa.gov/programs/programs-and-services/child-care/hcci

What are the steps to wash hands?
1. Turn on water
2. Wet hands
3. Apply liquid soap (Do not use antibacterial soap)
4. Scrub hands together until a soapy lather appears and continue scrubbing for at least 20 seconds (sing "Happy Birthday" twice). Scrub between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, and back of hands.
5. Rinse hands with water
6. Turn off water (Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet if available)
7. Dry hands with paper towel

Scan the QR code to find your local CCNC or visit online at **hhs.iowa.gov/hcci/consultants**

Contact the Iowa SIDS Foundation for FREE safe sleep brochures and posters! **https://iowasids.org/**

IOWA HHS