

COVID-19

RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPAND ACCESS TO HAND WASHING AND ITS PROPER USE

Promoting handwashing is essential to minimize transmission of SARS-COV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and to save lives.

One of the most common ways of transmission of SARS-COV-2 is from contaminated hands touching the mouth, nose and eyes. The virus can also be transferred from one surface to another through contaminated hands.

Free access and mandatory use of handwashing stations would help to minimize SARS-COV-2 transmission and save lives.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate, with the public sector in coordination with the private sector, for the need to install handwashing stations or points.
- Facilitate hand washing by increasing the free availability of hand washing stations with soap and water.
- Provide hand washing stations, with safe water and soap, free for the public at large at the entrance of critical points:
 - Health care establishments
 - Commercial facilities such as supermarkets and banks
 - Public transport stops and stations, such as for buses, trains, boats and airplanes
 - Public buildings
 - Sport facilities
- Mandatory hand washing before entering critical points.
- Ensure free hand washing stations with safe soap and water in vulnerable communities that have limited access to water delivery services.
- Disseminate information on how to wash your hands correctly (contact with soap for 40-60 seconds) and when to wash your hands:
 - Immediately after arriving home or at work
 - Before and after handling money
 - Before and after performing a cleaning task
 - After using the bathroom
 - Before and after eating

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- Before and after preparing food
- Change the messages regularly and make them fun and exciting.
- Communicate (or reiterate) that hand washing is a long-term approach against diseases.
- Ensure health care facilities have hand washing stations at their entrances, all service points, where Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is put on and removed, where waste is handled, within 5 meters of toilets, in waiting areas and in all public areas.

PRODUCTS FOR HAND WASHING

- Use regular soap, which is effective against SARS-COV-2.
- SARS-COV-2 cannot be transmitted through bars of soap.
- If you don't have regular soap:
 - Natural soaps from traditional plants can be used with saponins that have surface-active properties such as alfalfa, marigold, guarana, beans, common soapwort, thyme, among others
 - Any surface-active agent is effective against viruses because they deactivate the proteins that surround the virus (hair or body shampoo, washes liquid utensils and detergents that contain sodium lauryl sulfate, sodium lauryl ether, linear alkylaryl sodium sulphonate (LAS or LABS) or alcohols. fatty ethoxylates)
 - Do not use products that contain caustic soda , which is in some commercial detergents
- Where soap and water are not an option, 70% alcoholic gel should be used, applying it between 20-30 seconds for hand hygiene.
- If you do not have soap and water, 70% alcohol gel or Hydrogen Peroxide, a sodium hypochlorite disinfecting solution at 0.05%¹ concentration could be used to wash your hands, however, this is the least recommended option, since frequent use can lead to allergies, dermatitis, depigmentation, and even asthma.

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