

September 1, 2001

EAP News #90

## Hand Washing 101

As fall approaches and children head back to school, they can look forward to many great things: New classrooms and desks, playing on the monkey bars at recess, shooting basketball hoops in gym class, seeing their friends who have been away all summer and picking up germs from all of them! Back to school time is the perfect time to encourage proper hand washing habits for the whole family.

Keeping hands clean is the most important means for preventing infectious diseases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, these can include respiratory infections and gastrointestinal disorders. Teaching kids at home about proper hand washing helps them to maintain good habits and keeps them healthier as they return to school. Adults, too, could use a reminder so they can provide a good example for their children.

The first step is finding a hand soap that cleans properly and is effective for the whole family. Liquid hand soap in a dispenser is a more sanitary and convenient way to wash up.

Since kids are busy with all kinds of activities at this time of year, they can easily forget about proper washing habits or about hand washing altogether. Simply stressing the importance of not spreading germs to their friends and family and making hand washing a fun activity will help to keep kids clean.

The best suggestion is to start early. A good system for pre-kindergarten or younger children is to wash hands for two verses of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." With older children and teenagers, being up front about germs and the spread of disease should help them remember to keep their hands clean.

It is important for both kids and adults to know how and when to wash their hands, and to spread this knowledge to friends and family instead of

spreading germs! Here are some helpful tips to ensure proper technique and timing.

### How to wash hands properly:

1. Roll up long sleeves and remove any rings from your fingers
2. Using warm water, wet hands thoroughly.
3. Apply soap and wash completely, rubbing palms together, getting the tops of hands, in between fingers, and the wrists. After kids have been playing outside in the sandbox or playground, it is important to have them wash their forearms as well.
4. Rinse hands well.
5. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel.
6. Using the paper towel, turn off the faucet and dispose of the towel.

### When to wash your hands:

#### BEFORE

- ☞ Preparing food
- ☞ Eating
- ☞ Changing a diaper
- ☞ Fixing a wound or injury
- ☞ Handling an infant
- ☞ Inserting or removing contact lenses

#### AFTER

- ☞ Using the bathroom
- ☞ Changing a diaper
- ☞ Handling uncooked foods, especially meat, poultry or fish
- ☞ Visiting someone who is ill
- ☞ Sneezing or blowing your nose
- ☞ Whenever your hands do not feel clean

As the Centers for Disease Control have noted, dirty hands are a key source in the spread of disease. Using an antibacterial soap will further help to do away with these illness causing germs. By using the simple tips mentioned above and maintaining good habits out side of the home, everyone should have a healthier and cleaner fall season

THE LEAST AMOUNT OF EXERCISE

**What's the least amount of exercise you can do and show some physiological benefits? The American College of Sports Medicine says it takes a minimum of 10 minutes of exercise twice a week at an intensity level of 40 to 50 percent of your maximum heart rate. A brisk walk falls into that category.**

ANOTHER ADDICTION

Addiction comes in many forms. Gambling can be one of them. Remember, playing the lottery is a form of gambling. Here's a test from Gamblers Anonymous. See how many yes answers you give to these questions.

1. Have you ever lost time from work or school due to gambling?
2. Has gambling ever made your home life unhappy?
3. Has gambling affected your reputation?
4. Have you ever felt remorse after gambling?
5. Have you ever gambled to get money with which to pay debts or otherwise solve financial difficulties?
6. Has gambling ever caused a decrease in your ambition of efficiency?
7. After losing, have you felt you must return as soon as possible and win back your losses?
8. After a win, have you had a strong urge to return and win again?
9. Have you ever borrowed to finance your gambling?
10. Have you ever sold anything to finance your gambling?
11. Have you ever been reluctant to use your "gambling money" for normal expenditures?
12. Has your gambling made you careless of the welfare of yourself and your family?
13. Have you ever gambled longer than planned?
14. Have you ever gambled to escape worry or trouble?
15. Have you ever committed an illegal act to finance gambling?
16. Do arguments, disappointments or frustrations create within you an urge to gamble?
17. Has gambling caused you to have difficulty sleeping?
18. Have you ever had an urge to celebrate any good fortune by a few hours of gambling?
19. Have you ever considered self-destruction as a result of your gambling?

If the number of "yes" answers troubles you, Gamblers Anonymous may be of help.

EXCUSES FOR NOT EXERCISING

What excuses have you used for not exercising? If you've used any of these, we've given you something to think about.

**Exercise is hard**

Begin with ordinary walking. See where it might lead you.

**I don't have the time.**

If you'll schedule some time to get started, you'll likely find more time than you realize.

**I'm usually too tired.**

Often exercise gives you more energy and you'll actually feel less tired.

**I hate to fail, so I just won't start.**

If you choose an activity you like, begin slowly, and set realistic goals, you reduce your chances of failing.

**I don't have anyone to work out with.**

Maybe you haven't asked. Usually there are others out there who'd like to start but nobody has asked them.

**There's no convenient place.**

Try your own neighborhood or nearby mall, or exercise in front of the TV.

**I'm afraid of being injured.**

Walking is safe for almost everybody.

**The weather's too bad.**

You can do many activities in your house. Of all home exercise equipment, a stationary bike takes up the least amount of space, and is easy to use in front of the TV.

**Exercise is boring**

Work out with a friend. Use exercise to get something done, like running an errand on foot.

**I'm too overweight.**

You'll benefit so much from the exercise that soon it won't be considered a detriment.

**I'm too old.**

You're never too old for exercise. People of any age can benefit from exercise.

**HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.**