

# Handwashing/Bathing After a Flood



Cleanliness is important to help prevent the spread of disease. Clean, safe running water is necessary for cleanliness. Safe running water can sometimes be hard to find after a flood.

## **Handwashing**

Keeping hands clean helps prevent the spread of germs. Wash your hands after working in flood waters, after using the toilet, before handling food and before and after treating a wound. If your water well has been flooded or your home or business is under a boil water order, wash your hands with soap and water that has been boiled or disinfected. Follow these steps to make sure you wash your hands properly:

- Wet your hands with clean water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub your hands well; be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean cloth or paper towel.

A temporary handwashing station can be created by using a large water jug that contains clean water (for example, boiled or disinfected).

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs.

**Hand sanitizers are not effective when hands are visibly dirty.**

## **Bathing**

Bathing after a water-related emergency should only be done with clean, safe water. Sometimes water that is not safe to drink can be used for bathing. Listen to local authorities for the safe uses of your water.

**Do not use contaminated water to wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, or make ice.**

Source: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[www.health.mo.gov](http://www.health.mo.gov)