

Infant Handwashing

When to Wash Infant's Hands

- Upon arrival
- Before and after infant receives bottle or food
- After diapering
- After contact with body fluids
- After outside play
- Before and after water play
- After handling pets
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before going home

Handwashing Steps

- Turn on warm water (80-110°F in NC).
- Wet hands with water.
- Apply liquid soap.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds. Rub top and inside of hands, under nails and between fingers.
- Rinse hands under running water for at least 10 seconds.
- Dry hands with disposable paper towel.
- Turn off the water using paper towel.
- Throw paper towel into a lined trash container.



Very Young Infants

Very Young Infants unable to support their heads

The infant is unable to hold head up or stand at sink, or the infant is too heavy for you to hold at sink.

Wash the infants hands with:

- disposable wipes
- or*
- the three towel method (prepared ahead):
 1. dampened and soapy for washing infant's hands
 2. dampened with water for rinsing infant's hands
 3. dry for drying infant's hands
- Then wash your hands.



Young Infants

Young Infants who can support their heads but not stand at the sink

You are able to hold the infant, but the infant cannot stand at the sink.

- Carry infant to sink.
- Hold infant at the sink and wash infant's hands.
- Then wash your hands.

Caution! Do not push the infant's tummy into the sink.

Back Aid Place your foot on a 12" stool to lift your leg. Rest the infant on your knee at the sink.



Older Infants

Older Infants who can stand at the sink

Infant can stand at a toddler height sink or on a stool at a sink.

- First assist the infant with hand washing.
- Then wash your hands.

North Carolina Child Care Health & Safety Resource Center
1.800.367.2229 • www.healthychildcarenc.org

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