

## MSDE -Office of Child Care

### Hand Washing Procedure: How to Wash Your Hands?

**1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.**

➤ **Why?**

- Hands could become re-contaminated if placed in a basin of standing water that has been contaminated through previous use.
- Clean running water should be used. When running water is not available, washing with non-potable water may still be an appropriate option.
- The temperature of the water does not appear to affect microbe removal as long as proper hand washing technique is practiced.
- Turning off the faucet after wetting hands saves water.
- Using soap to wash hands is more effective than using water alone.

**2. Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.

➤ **Why?**

- Lathering and scrubbing hands creates friction, which helps lift dirt, grease, and microbes from skin. Microbes are present on all surfaces of the hand with high concentration under the nails. So the entire hand should be scrubbed.

**3. Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.

➤ **Why?**

- Washing hands for about 15-30 seconds removes more germs from hands than washing for shorter periods.
- Global recommendations are to wash hands for about 20 seconds

**4. Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.

➤ **Why?**

- Rinsing the soap away minimizes skin irritation.

**5. Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

➤ **Why?**

- Germs can be transferred more easily to and from wet hands; therefore, hands should be dried after washing. Use a clean cloth or paper towel or air dry.