

# What's on your hands?

Hand hygiene is one of the simplest ways to reduce the spread of infection. We all have a part to play in protecting ourselves and others from germs that can cause disease and illness by simply washing our hands or using hand sanitiser when it really counts.

Whether you're at home, at work or on holidays - hand hygiene matters, and it matters even more if you're sick, recovering from illness or are around people who are unwell.

So look after yourself and please clean your hands.



## Some reminders of when to clean your hands:

**Before eating** to prevent the ingestion of any harmful bacteria that may be on your hands.



**After going to the bathroom** it's best to wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet.



Before preparing or handling food.

After blowing or touching your nose.

After coughing or sneezing into your hands.



## Did you know...



1

It wasn't until 1847 that hand hygiene was discovered. This significant discovery is often credited to Dr Ignaz Semmelweis - a Hungarian physician and scientist who pioneered antiseptic hand washing in Vienna, Austria.

2

Germs commonly refer to bacteria, viruses, fungi and protozoa (microscopic one-celled animals eg. amoeba). Not all germs are harmful and the ones that go on to cause disease are known as 'pathogens'.

3

Many germs live and grow on healthy human skin and normally do not cause any harm. However, if the skin is broken due to a wound, cut, puncture or surgical incision, this can introduce pathogens into the body.

4

Germs can survive on a variety of surfaces for a surprising amount of time. A CSIRO study found that the virus responsible for COVID-19 disease can survive on non-porous surfaces for 28 days.



5

Germs do not penetrate in-tact skin. To introduce germs into the body, they are often transferred from a contaminated surface via the hands, and introduced via the nose, eyes or mouth, or broken skin.

