

**January/February  
 2013**

# SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

## HAND WASHING

We have all heard how important hand washing is; but, really what are the benefits?

**Did you know**, there is a Global Handwashing Day? It is October 15<sup>th</sup>. It began as a way to encourage children and schools to follow handwashing protocol. It is now celebrated by over 200 million people, not just school children, in over 100 countries with all those involved promoting handwashing with soap. It occurs worldwide each year and is celebrated by all those individuals who understand how important handwashing really is.

Why is proper hand-washing so important? Well for one thing handwashing can drastically reduce the number of adults and children becoming ill. Illnesses such as diarrheal diseases, pneumonia and influenza can be reduced simply by handwashing with soap.

Handwashing with soap removes germs much more

**Stop the Spread of Germs!**  
**Wash your Hands**

1. Wet
2. Wash with soap for 20 seconds
3. Rinse
4. Dry
5. Turn off water with paper towel

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effectively than using only water. Typically, most people rinse their hands with water believing this method is sufficient. Rarely is a lack of soap or water the reason handwashing does not occur. It is just not a habit for most people.

So how does handwashing become habit? It is really very simple. We must change our behavior! Whatever the motivating factor might be: knowing how to wash; disgust of others not washing; or to protect and teach others, we must make an effort to change our behavior.

### Handwashing vs. Hand sanitizers.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Alcohol based hand sanitizers can reduce the number of germs but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce germs on your hands.

### Special Points of Interest

-  [Global Handwashing Day](#)
-  [Why Handwashing?](#)
-  [Handwashing 101](#)
-  [Missouri Dept. of Health and Senior Services](#)