Proper Hand Washing for Elders

Hand washing is an important way to reduce the spread of infectious diseases. Germs from human and animal sources can be transmitted to hands, which can transmit the germs to other people, foods, and anything else that the hands touch. Proper hand washing can reduce the numbers of harmful microorganisms on our hands and reduce the risk of some diseases.

1 Remove jewelry, except for plain wedding band, if you are going to prepare foods.

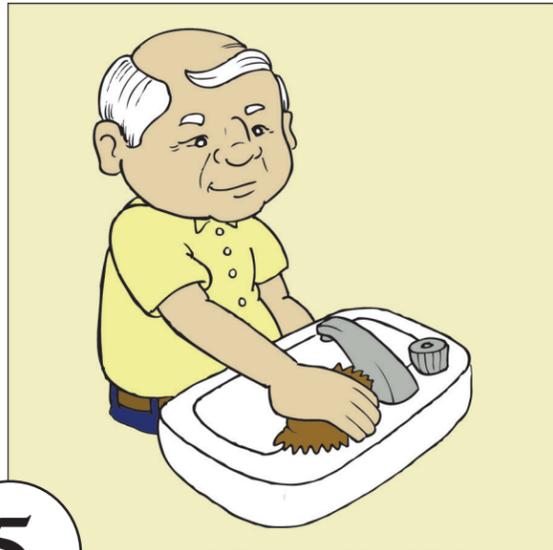**2** Use soap and running water.

3 Rub your hands and wrists together for 20 seconds (singing the Happy Birthday song twice). Use soap up to your elbows if they are dirty.

4 Rinse your hands and wrists under running water.

5 If you are in a public restroom, use a paper towel to turn off the water. Dry hands and wrists with clean, disposable paper towels. If you use hand sanitizer, apply it now.

Wash your hands before:
- Eating or drinking
- Handling or preparing foods
- Touching serving utensils
- Serving foods

Wash your hands after:
- Visiting the restroom
- Covering your nose or mouth when your cough or sneeze
- Gardening or working outdoors
- Handling pets and their waste
- Working with raw foods
- Changing baby diapers
- Doing other activities that dirty your hands