Proper Hand Washing for Caregivers

Hand washing is an important way to reduce the fecal-oral transfer of germs that cause diseases. Young children and frail elders have less ability to fight germs than others. As a caregiver you can help reduce the risk of diseases that can be transmitted in a crowded environment by using proper hand washing procedures.

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

2. Use soap and running water.

3. Lather hands and wrists with soap for 20 seconds. (Sing the Happy Birthday song twice).

4. Wash the backs of hands and wrists, between fingers, and under fingernails using a nailbrush, if needed.

5. Rinse your hands and wrists under running water.

6. 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 and preparing foods
- Touching serving utensils
- Preparing formula for infants
- Handling ready to eat foods
- Serving foods

Wash your hands after:
- Visiting the restroom
- Covering your nose or mouth when you cough or sneeze
- Working with raw foods
- Changing diapers
- Engaging in activities outdoors
- Doing other activities that dirty your hands