

Dec. 6 - 12 National Hand Washing Awareness Week

One simple act can prevent the spread of most diseases. Raise your hand if you know what it is.

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control, hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of disease.

Most diseases are spread through contact with body fluids. A good example is the common cold. If a person has a cold virus and touches his own mucus, even by simply blowing his nose, and then touches a door handle, the virus can live for a time on the handle. A non-infected person may open the door, touch her eyes inadvertently, and catch the same cold virus. The chance of infection would be substantially lower if both people washed their hands more frequently and were conscious of what they touched.

Sound simple enough? Only 67 percent of Americans wash their hands with anything, even just water, after they use a restroom. In some parts of the country the number is less than 50 percent. This puts them and the rest of the population at risk for a host of infections, ranging from the common cold and flu, to skin infections, digestive viruses and even more serious diseases, such as hepatitis A.

Reduce your risk

Pay attention to what you touch and wash your hands immediately when in the following situations:

- after you use a restroom,
- before and after you eat,
- before you touch your eyes, nose or mouth,
- before and after you prepare food, and after you handle meat or fish, before moving on to other food items,
- after you change a diaper,
- after you pet a dog, cat or other animal,
- after you touch plants or soil,
- after you visit a hospital or nursing home,
- after you come in contact with any body fluids or touch items that may have come in contact with body fluids.

Know the technique: Scrub your hands for 15 to 30 seconds with regular soap and water (it doesn't have to be antibacterial soap to work) before rinsing. Studies show it is the length of time spent washing, not the type of soap, that makes the difference. Kids tend to spread infections more readily. Teach your kids hand washing tips and techniques and set an example by following them yourself.

FIGHT GERMS BY WASHING YOUR HANDS!

- 1 Wet your hands
- 2 Soap
- 3 Lather and scrub - 20 sec
- 4 Rinse - 10 sec
- 5 Turn off tap
- 6 Dry your hands

DONT FORGET TO WASH:

- between your fingers
- under your nails
- the tops of your hands

TEN HEALTHY HOLIDAY SUPERFOODS

Pull a chair up to this holiday table! Here is a list of ten foods that you can enjoy over the holiday season that will help you reap tons of nutritional benefits and even lose weight. Prepare them in a healthful way and watch your portions, then enjoy!

1. **Turkey:** One serving of turkey contains almost half of the recommended daily allowance of folic acid. It's also a great source of Vitamin B, Zinc, and Potassium. These nutrients keep cholesterol down, boost the immune system, and can protect against cancer and heart disease. Just don't deep fry it, and avoid eating the skin to save hundreds of calories. 3-4 ounces = 1 serving.
2. **Sweet Potatoes:** When roasted (and not doused in butter and marshmallows) sweet potatoes are one of the healthiest veggies in town. They are bursting with fiber, vitamin A, potassium, and phytochemicals, which are known to prevent cancer, aging, and arthritis.



3. **Cranberries:** These sweet and tangy berries are loaded with disease-fighting antioxidants and their fiber content helps to lower "bad" cholesterol levels. However, they are naturally low in sugar so many recipes call for large doses of added sweetener. Steer clear of all that sugar and try a sugar-substitute to keep them healthy.

4. **Pomegranates:** This amazing fruit is one of the richest sources of antioxidants around, and it's popular in many holiday dishes. You can enjoy the pomegranate's benefits by simply buying a bottle of its juice to add to your favorite recipe, or sprinkling the ruby red seeds over a salad.

5. **Pumpkin:** Pumpkins are packed with heart-healthy fiber and vitamin A. Since pumpkin is naturally very moist, you don't have to add lots of unhealthy ingredients to make it taste flavorful and keep it low-fat. Just substitute with skim-milk and egg whites to make any recipe healthier.
6. **Stuffing:** Guess what? With a few minor adjustments stuffing can actually be a healthy side. Pack it with nuts, dried fruits, carrots, and celery, and you'll benefit from fiber and a range of vitamins. The secret to healthy stuffing: Use low sodium chicken broth instead of butter to keep the dish moist and low in fat.
7. **Collard Greens:** Prepare these leafy greens in a steamer, and gain a ton of vitamins and antioxidants. If you must, use turkey bacon or sauté it in olive oil.
8. **Pecans:** Try sprinkling this yummy nut over salads, or even add it to your stuffing. Pecans are a great source of vitamin E and magnesium, which is great for muscle strength. They're also packed with protein, fiber, and the same "good" fats as olive oil.



9. **Cinnamon and Nutmeg:** Mixing these spices into fruit or vegetable sides can help you lower your cholesterol and maintain insulin levels in the blood.

10. **Red Wine:** Okay, so it is about 100 calories per 5 ounce serving, but red wine also serves some heart healthy functions too. Red wines are high in antioxidants- and the dryer the wine the better it is for you. You can cut the calories in half by mixing with sparkling water.