

Hand Hygiene – Student Instructions

Develop an Effective Handwashing Process

Good handwashing habits are key to stopping the spread of many diseases. However, just because you wash your hands doesn't mean you're doing it well. How good do you think your handwashing technique is?

Tools of the Trade

- Disposable gloves (3+ pairs)
- Acrylic paint
- Paint protection measures

Before you begin:

Cover the area around you in newspaper, plastic, cardboard, or another material that will stop any paint drips or splatters. Make sure you are wearing clothes that can get messy or wear an apron or other covering to protect them. Consider performing this experiment outside over grass or dirt.

Part 1: Examine the effectiveness of your hand washing method

Put on a pair of disposable gloves. Squeeze paint into the palm of one of your hands, making sure to use at least a tablespoon or two. **Close your eyes.** Pretend that the paint is soapy water and use it to "wash" your hands. Your goal here is to see how effective your normal handwashing routine is, so don't worry about making it perfect. Just do what you would normally do. When you are finished washing, open your eyes. Any unpainted area of your glove represents an area where **germs** could still be hiding.

Consider: How effective was your washing method? If your hands were not 100% covered in paint, what areas needed more attention? How long did you spend washing your hands?

Part 2: Develop a more effective handwashing method

Put on a fresh pair of disposable gloves. Add more paint to the palm of one of your hands. Use the paint to visualize your germ removal. Develop a step-by-step procedure for proper handwashing that you could teach to others. Write your steps on another sheet of paper, adding pictures if necessary.

Part 3: Try the World Health Organization handwashing method

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a handwashing routine for use in healthcare settings. This method provides a consistent routine that cleans all areas of the hands thoroughly and ensures enough time has passed to remove **germs**. Put on another clean pair of gloves, add some paint, and try this method to see how effective it is.

Video instructions are also available here: <https://youtu.be/3PmVJQUCm4E>

Bonus activity: The website Wash Your Lyrics was developed in March 2020 by a 17-year-old who wanted to help people stay safe during the coronavirus pandemic. You can use the site to make your own memorable handwashing poster using the lyrics to any song. Try it!

<https://washyourlyrics.com>



Create Hand Hygiene Art

When Ignaz Semmelweis instituted mandatory handwashing in 1847 at Vienna General Hospital to help curb maternal deaths due to childbed fever, he was met with resistance from his colleagues. Twenty years later, Joseph Lister published "An Address on the Antiseptic System of Treatment in Surgery" in *The Lancet*, which proposed that surgeons should clean their hands and instruments before operating. This practice was adopted and led to a revolution in healthcare by dramatically increasing a patient's likelihood of survival. Handwashing and tool cleaning were critical to stopping the spread of disease and infections from one patient to another.

How can art communicate and interpret the practice of one of the most simple and effective disease prevention strategies – handwashing?

In 2011, the David J. Sencer CDC Museum curated the art exhibition *Watching Hands: Artists Respond to Keeping Well*. Artists were asked how art can communicate and interpret the practice of one of the most simple and effective disease prevention strategies: handwashing. The six artists who participated created paintings, drawings, installations, and graphic communications that live on in an online exhibition. Look through the works, read more about the artists, and watch the videos to hear them talk about the artistic process and how it relates back to **public health**.

Read the introductory essay from curator Louise E. Shaw for insight into the exhibition and its message. <https://www.cdc.gov/museum/online/watching-hands/essay.html>

Watching Hands: Artists Respond to Keeping Well

<https://www.cdc.gov/museum/online/watching-hands.html>

When you have finished exploring the exhibition, create your own piece of art that centers around the act and importance of handwashing. It may seem small, but simple handwashing has saved countless lives during the last 150+ years. You have your choice of medium, including photography, sculpture, drawing, digital media, painting, needlecraft, or any other art form.



Share Your Findings

The David J. Sencer CDC Museum uses award-winning exhibits and innovative programming to educate visitors about the value of **public health** and presents the rich heritage and vast accomplishments of CDC. Your demonstration could be a valuable contribution! Share your demonstration with the CDC Museum on Instagram using **@CDCmuseum**.