

# health awareness



CTSI

A COUNTY HEALTH POOL PUBLICATION

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## HANDWASHING AWARENESS

December 5-11 is National Handwashing Awareness Week. Frequent and proper handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent against getting sick. Respiratory viruses like the COVID-19, the flu, RSV, pneumonia, and even the common cold can only enter the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth (i.e., the t-zone).

Coming into contact with infected respiratory droplets spreads these viruses, and one of the most common ways is when we touch an infected surface and then touch our faces. Two studies in 2008 and the other in 2015 found that people touched their faces be-

tween 16 to 23 times per hour. Washing our hands can stop us from introducing infected respiratory droplets to our t-zone.

### The 4 Principles of Hand Awareness

The American Medical Association and the American Academy of Family Physicians endorse the following four principles of hand awareness:

1. Wash your hands when they are dirty and before eating
2. Do not cough into your hands
3. Do not sneeze into your hands

4. Above all, do not put your fingers into your eyes, nose, or mouth

How to wash your hands  
There are five simple and effective steps to handwashing.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy

*(Article is continued on reverse side.)*

Birthday” song from beginning to end two times.

- Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
- Dry hands using a clean towel, or let them air dry.

### Handwashing in the Workplace


In 2002 a University of Arizona study found that the workplace is crawling with germs: Phones have up to 52,127 germs per square inch, keyboards 3,925 per square inch, and computer mice 1,676 per square inch. The American Cleaning Institute developed the following tips for employees to stay healthy at work. At work you should wash

your hands:

- Each time you use the restroom
- Before and after staff meetings if food is served
- After scanning newspapers or magazines in the break-room
- Before and after lunch
- Before and after using a coworker’s keyboard, office supplies, shared office equipment, etc.
- Before and after a work meet and greet activity

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

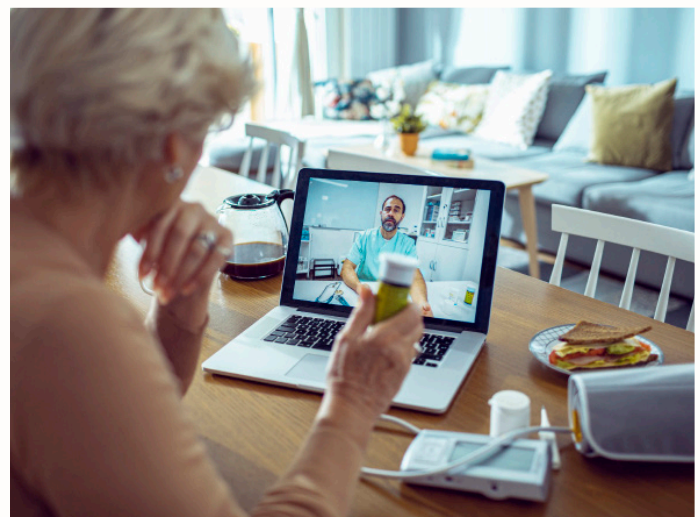
### Where’s the dirt?

The most frequently missed parts when handwashing are the nailbeds of fingers, the third and fourth fingertips, the area in between fingers, and the entire front side of the thumb. Be thorough and suds up all parts of your hands. The CDC recommends handwashing for at least 20 seconds. However, studies show that the reduction of skin bacteria is nearly ten times greater by washing with soap for 30 seconds. No soap and water? Use hand sanitizer instead. 

## Benefits Corner

### Co-Pays Reinstated for Live Health Online

Several years ago, the County Health Pool implemented a telehealth benefit through Anthem called “Live Health Online.” This benefit had specific doctors through Anthem that CHP Members could utilize as a telehealth option. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, CHP opened up the telehealth option to all in-network providers with the removal of cost shares in an effort to assist members in continuing medical care during that time. Effective January 1, 2022, CHP will continue to offer a telehealth option through both in-network providers and Live Health Online. However, telehealth visits will have cost shares reinstated; the cost shares will be the same co-pay and/or co-insurance for an in-person office visit for the benefit plan in which you and/or your dependents are enrolled.



As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at 303 861 0507.