



# Weekly Safety Meeting

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## Show Me the Science - When and How to Use Hand Sanitizer

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible because handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs and chemicals on hands. But if soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. The guidance for effective handwashing and using hand sanitizer in community settings was developed based on data from several studies.

### Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizers Can Quickly Reduce the Number of Microbes on Hands in Some Situations, but Sanitizers Do Not Eliminate All Types of Germs

**Why?** Soap and water are more effective than hand sanitizers at removing certain kinds of germs, like *Cryptosporidium*, norovirus, and *Clostridium difficile*. Although alcohol-based hand sanitizers can inactivate many types of microbes very effectively when used correctly, people may not use a large enough volume of the sanitizers or may wipe it off before it has dried.

### Hand Sanitizers May Not Be as Effective When Hands Are Visibly Dirty or Greasy

**Why?** Many studies show that hand sanitizers work well in clinical settings like hospitals, where hands come into contact with germs, but generally are not heavily soiled or greasy. Some data also show that hand sanitizers may work well against certain types of germs on slightly soiled hands. However, hands may become very greasy or soiled in community settings, such as after people handle food, play sports, work in the soil, work in industry, handle containers, etc. When hands are heavily soiled or greasy, hand sanitizers may not work well. Handwashing with soap and water is recommended in such circumstances.

### Hand Sanitizers May Not be as Effective When Hands are Visibly Dirty or Greasy

**Why?** Although few studies have been conducted, hand sanitizers probably cannot remove or inactivate many types of harmful chemicals. In one study, people who reported using hand sanitizer to clean hands had increased levels of pesticides in their bodies. If hands have touched harmful chemicals, wash carefully with soap and water (or as directed by a poison control center).

## **If Soap and Water Are Not Available...**

Use and alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

**Why?** Many studies have found that sanitizers with an alcohol concentration between 60-95% are more effective at killing germs than those with a lower alcohol concentration or non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizers without 60-95% alcohol 1) may not work equally well for many types of germs; and 2) merely reduce the growth of germs rather than kill them outright.

## **Remember, When Using Hand Sanitizer...**

Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount) and rub the product all over the surfaces of your hands until your hands are dry.

**Why?** The steps for hand sanitizer use are based on a simplified procedure recommended by the CDC. Instructing people to cover all surfaces of both hands with hand sanitizer has been found to provide similar disinfection effectiveness as providing detailed steps for rubbing-in hand sanitizer.

***IF YOU CAN'T WASH WITH SOAP...USE AT LEAST 60% ALCOHOL-BASED  
HAND SANITIZER!***

## Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests