VA Wants You To Clean Your Hands

We are partners in keeping healthy.

Together we can stop the spread of germs.

NOTE: This information is NOT intended to address specific hand decontamination requirements for health professionals caring for patients.

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ALCOHOL HAND RUBS
- are alcohol-based liquid, gel, or foam hand cleaners
- don't require water to clean hands
- kill most germs that cause disease and illness (like colds or flu)
- are not effective on germs that live in your intestines

Not all hand rubs contain alcohol: Check the label. Use only the Alcohol-Based Rubs with at least 60% alcohol.

USE SOAP AND WATER INSTEAD OF ALCOHOL HAND RUB
- when hands are visibly dirty or soiled
- before eating or preparing food, after handling raw meat, after handling animal waste, and after using the restroom, changing diapers, or assisting someone with toileting

This information from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is for veterans, their families, friends, visitors, volunteers, and employees. It describes when and how to clean hands by using soap and water, or by using alcohol hand rubs (alcohol hand sanitizers). It provides basic cleaning instruction and describes when and how to clean hands to reduce the spread of germs.

www.cdc.gov/Features/HandWashing
Cleaning hands properly is easy and quick!

**USING SOAP AND WATER**

1. Wet hands using water that is a comfortable temperature
2. Add soap to make lather
3. Rub palms, back of hands, and between fingers
4. Rub for at least 15 seconds
5. Rinse hands thoroughly and dry well

**USING ALCOHOL HAND RUB**  
(also called alcohol hand sanitizer)

1. Apply to the palm of one hand (enough to use on BOTH hands)
2. Rub palms, back of hands, and between fingers
3. Rub until hands are dry (if it does not take at least 30 seconds, you may need to add more alcohol hand rub)

Clean hands help keep germs away.

www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn