



Public Health
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PLAINVILLE-SOUTHINGTON REGIONAL HEALTH DISTRICT

Main Office
196 NORTH MAIN STREET
SOUTHINGTON, CT 06489

Satellite Office
ONE CENTRAL SQUARE
PLAINVILLE, CT 06062

860-276-6275 • FAX 860-276-6277 • pshd.org
SHANE LOCKWOOD, M.P.H., R.S.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



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CONTACT: SHANE LOCKWOOD, 860-276-6275

Stay Healthy This Flu Season

PSHD Encourages Residents to Practice Good Hand Washing

It's cold and flu season, and the Plainville Southington Health District (PSHD) wants to remind residents the best way to stay healthy is to practice good hygiene. One of the basic elements of good health is knowing when and how to wash hands. Washing hands properly can significantly reduce the spread of infectious disease among both children and adults.

"Flu activity in Connecticut remains high and widespread," said Shane Lockwood, PSHD Director of Health. "It's important to wash hands properly. Rubbing your hands vigorously with soap and warm water allows you to pull dirt, bacteria, germs and viruses away from your skin."

PSHD offers tips on how to properly wash hands:

- Wash hands using warm running water. Use lots of soap.
- Wash hands and wrists for at least 20 seconds (sing the Happy Birthday song twice), washing the front and back of the hands, between the fingers, and under the nails.

- Rinse hands well under warm running water and dry them completely with a clean towel.
- Turn the water off using a disposable towel so as not to touch the faucet with clean hands and then throw the towel away.

Children should be encouraged to wash hands before eating and after:

- Using the bathroom
- Playing with a pet
- Sneezing or coughing
- Playing outdoors
- Taking out the garbage
- Sharing toys with other children

Antibacterial gels are effective in killing germs, in the absence of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly dirty. To use antibacterial gel correctly:

- Apply about a teaspoonful of the alcohol gel on the palm of one hand.
- Rub all over hands, making sure you rub the front, back, and fingernail areas.
- Let the alcohol dry (about 30 seconds).
- Wash with soap and water as soon as you can.

Practicing good hand washing techniques will reduce one's risk of getting or spreading illness, such as the common cold and influenza, this winter.

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The mission of the Plainville Southington Health District is to preserve, protect, promote, and improve the quality of life in a healthy environment through the prevention of disease, ongoing health education opportunities and the enhancement of the well-being of its residents.