

Global Handwashing Day aims to raise awareness and understanding about the importance of washing hands with soap. Washing hands correctly with soap is a highly effective way to prevent the spread of potentially harmful germs that could cause disease. The day was created by the Global Public-Private Partnership for Handwashing and was first run on the 15th October 2008. Since then it has been held every year and in 2017 more than 500 million people around the world celebrated Global Handwashing Day!

This year's Global Handwashing Day aims to raise awareness about the importance of handwashing when coming into contact with food. The main purpose of the national day is reflected in this year's tagline: *Clean hands ? a recipe for health?* which aims to make people aware that handwashing should be part of every mealtime routine.

Handwashing is an important part of keeping food safe and preventing the spread of potentially harmful germs. The day aims to promote a number of ways to encourage hand hygiene standards, including:

- Washing hands with soap at important times, such as before cooking or eating
- Practicing good handwashing behaviour and reminding others to always wash their hands before eating
- Ensure that handwashing is part of your routine before you consume food
- Make sure that suitable handwashing facilities are available. This includes antibacterial soap and hand drying solutions [2].
- Promote effective handwashing to influence a behavioural change that means more and more people will take handwashing seriously. It can be a good idea to place a handwashing technique guidance poster [3] in washrooms.

Handwashing ? an effective hygiene solution

Handwashing is a highly effective and low-cost hygiene solution, which helps to prevent the spread of germs and disease. Despite this, there is still an issue even in the UK, with people not using soap to wash their hands. Even when soap and sanitising solutions [4] are available in washrooms, many people will simply run their hands under the water for a few seconds, which is not an effective method to remove germs. Soap is required to break down the dirt and grease on your hands, so that it can then be dislodged by rubbing your hands together and rinsed away by the water.

In other less developed countries around the world the issue may extend to people not having access to soap to wash their hands. Every year 1.4 million children under the age of 5 die as a result of suffering from pneumonia and diarrhoea. Improving children's access to soap and educating them on the importance of handwashing could help to reduce the number of deaths caused by diarrhoea by up to 50%.

Unwashed hands can easily transfer germs to food when cooking or eating. It must become habit for everyone around the world to wash their hands before every meal time.

Handwashing and Food Hygiene

If hands are not washed properly when handling food, then food items can become a carrier of germs and eating these foods offers a pathway for germs to enter the body. This can subsequently cause disease. Washing hands thoroughly with soap prevents germs being transferred from our hands to our food and then into our bodies. In addition, it can sometimes be equally important to wash hands after preparing food, such as raw chicken. Uncooked chicken can spread harmful bacteria such as salmonella. This is why it is so important that people understand and make it a habit to wash their hands when coming into contact with food.

Join Citron Hygiene in supporting Global Handwashing Day 2018 by using #GlobalHandwashingDay on Twitter!

If you would like to find out more about implementing the effective handwashing solutions [4] in your washrooms, then please contact our team [5].