



HEALTH & WELLNESS NEWS

Health & Wellness Center closures

- Friday, Dec. 23, 2016 – 1 to 5 p.m.
- Monday, Dec. 26, 2016 – All day

Handwashing: Clean hands save lives

When & How to Wash Your Hands

Keeping hands clean through improved hand hygiene is one of the most important steps a person can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others.

Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands with soap and clean, running water. If clean, running water is not accessible, as is common in many parts of the world, use soap and available water. If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol to clean hands

When Should You Wash Your Hands?

- Before, during and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed or animal waste
- After handling pet food or pet treats
- After touching garbage

How Should You Wash Your Hands?

- 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 Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

What Should You Do If You Don't Have Soap And Clean, Running Water?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs and might not remove harmful chemicals. Hand sanitizers are not as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

How do you use hand sanitizers?

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



Emotional wellness this holiday season

In this informative Q&A that addresses common misconceptions related to mental health concerns during the holidays, Lisa Furst, assistant vice president of Training and Quality Improvement at MHA-NYC, makes recommendations and provides supportive resources that will help you and your loved ones remain emotionally healthy this season.

Q: Is it true that people are more at risk for suicidal thinking during the holiday season?

A: We commonly hear that people may be more at risk for suicide during the holidays; however, research does not support this idea. While it's true that the holiday season may be particularly stressful for some people if they are socially isolated, experiencing conflicts in important relationships, dealing with financial challenges or experiencing other psychosocial stressors, we do not typically see an increase in suicidal thinking during the holidays. Regardless of the season, anyone experiencing emotional distress or thoughts of suicide should reach out for support by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TALK).

Q: I've heard that sometimes people feel more depressed in the winter. Can you tell me more about Seasonal Affective Disorder?

A: Seasonal Affective Disorder is a type of depressive disorder in which people with the condition experience the symptoms of major depression, but usually during the times of the year when natural sunlight is diminished, such as in the autumn and winter months. People who are diagnosed with SAD can benefit from antidepressant medications and psychotherapy to alleviate their symptoms; additionally, people experiencing SAD may also benefit from increased exposure to light using a light box during the months of the year when sunlight is weaker. People with SAD often experience a diminishment of their depressive symptoms over time as the seasons change and light gets stronger in the spring and summer months. Anyone experiencing depressive symptoms during any time of the year should visit their primary care doctor or a mental health professional for an evaluation. To get emotional support and/or to find local mental health providers near you, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TALK).

Q: What are some ways that I can manage my stress this holiday season?

A: Stress is quite common during the holiday season as people feel pressure to manage multiple pressures, including gift buying, hosting or attending multiple family gatherings, and other social occasions. As a result, many people feel stressed about how to manage the financial aspects of the holidays, handling the expectations of their families and friends and may feel bombarded with obligations during the weeks leading up to the holidays. Some strategies that can help to reduce stress include making a holiday budget and sticking to it, attending social gatherings that you most want to attend and not attending those that aren't as important, and taking the time to practice self-care, including eating well, staying physically active, connecting with those people who matter the most to you and taking time out for yourself to relax and decompress as needed.

Q: I've noticed that lately my daughter is withdrawn at family gatherings, she doesn't seem to be enjoying our family holiday events the way that she used to, and her school grades are slipping. I am concerned about her behavior. What should I do?

A: You are noticing some significant behavioral changes in your daughter and it is understandable that you are concerned. Speaking directly with your daughter to express your concern and asking her to tell you more about what she is thinking and feeling will allow your daughter to know that you are there to support her and can help her find a way to discuss any struggles she may be having. Speaking with family members and others who are close to your daughter may also help you understand more about what may be contributing to her difficulties, such as conflicts at school or with friends or family. If she has recently suffered any losses or other difficult experiences, these may also contribute to her withdrawal and other challenges. If these behaviors persist or get worse, it will be important to have your daughter evaluated by her pediatrician, your family doctor and/or a mental health professional to address any unmet mental health needs that may be emerging. To locate mental health providers who work with children and teens, you can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TALK).

Q: How can I be supportive of a friend of mine who is struggling emotionally due to the loss of a loved one and the constant reminder of that loss over the holiday season?

A: The holidays can be a particularly stressful time for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one. There are a variety of ways to be supportive, including spending time together, acknowledging that the holiday season may feel especially hard for your friend and that it is understandable if this is the case, and, if you also knew your friend's loved one, to let them know that you are thinking about that person, too, and are affected by their loss. Be open to talking about your friend's experience of loss, but also allow yourself to accept it if your friend doesn't want to discuss it. If your friend is struggling a great deal and reports that the loss is causing difficulties at home, at work, at school or in important relationships, it is possible that professional help may be needed to aid the healing process. To find grief counselors or other mental health professionals, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-8255 (TALK).