



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

HIP

HYGIENE IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT

“TOP TEN” HANDWASHING BEHAVIOR CHANGE TIPS FROM THE HYGIENE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

1. **Do formative research** to learn how handwashing practices are carried out where you are working. Formative research should help you learn:
 - who and how many are washing hands (and when and why)
 - who and how many are washing consistently and correctly (and when and why)
 - what motivates people to wash hands (smell good, feel/look clean, social expectations, responsible parent...) and whether “non-washers” perceive the same benefits
 - what prevents people from washing hands (lack of knowledge or felt need, lack of water, lack of time, cost/access to soap, lack of HW stations, significant time spent away from home...) and what simple, feasible strategies can overcome these barriers
2. **Incorporate KEY information into media, community and interpersonal promotion.** While knowledge is not enough to motivate the consistent and correct practice of handwashing, some knowledge is key, including: when and how to wash; the function of soap or a “soap-like substance” [to lift the germs and dirt] and of running water [to carry away the dirt and germs]; that clean (treated) water isn't needed to get clean hands; that hands can carry germs even if they don't look dirty; that hands should be air-dried if there is no completely clean cloth to use...
3. **Use simple technologies** to facilitate improved practice. Handwashing stations, particularly fixed handwashing stations, make it easier to wash, and when placed by latrines and cooking areas, serve as a visual reminder. Tippy Taps help reduce the amount of water needed for handwashing, thus removing or reducing a common barrier..
4. **Facilitate access to soap** (modify products to include small, inexpensive bars, or more appealing smell; focused subsidies or giveaways, stimulate local production, bring closer to community) **and promote use of soap alternatives when soap is not readily available.**
5. **Promote “small doable actions”** for people who feel they cannot move in one step from little or no handwashing to consistent and correct handwashing practice at all the critical times, to gradually move them toward the ideal.
6. **Use motivations learned from people who wash hands well** - not from health professionals.
7. **Get the word out!!!** Use appropriate mass media (radio in most cases; television where appropriate) to motivate and teach good handwashing practices, and create a sense that everyone's doing it. Engage respected individuals – religious leaders, traditional leaders, health workers – to promote, teach and publicly practice proper handwashing.
8. **Follow-up!!!** Interpersonal communication and group activities (handwashing demonstrations, health fairs, etc.) help to gradually improve practices.
9. **Engage teachers and school children** to ensure handwashing in schools and their homes. Facilitate handwashing stations outside of school latrines.
10. **Create a community norm** by monitoring handwashing conditions/practices and/or children's diarrhea, and periodically informing community members how they're doing.

