Hand washing is a simple and effective way to prevent the spread of germs.

Wash your hands:
- before preparing or eating food
- after going to the bathroom
- before and after tending to someone who is sick
- after handling garbage, or animal/human waste

It is best to use soap and clean water to wash your hands. Clean your hands with an alcohol-based gel if soap and water are not available.

**Proper hand washing with soap and water:**
- wet your hands under warm running water and apply soap
- rub your hands together to make a lather
- continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds and be sure to apply soap equally to entire surface of hands

**Proper use of alcohol-based gels if soap and water are not available:**
- apply the product to the palm of one hand
- rub hands together
- cover the surfaces of both hands with gel until both hands are dry

**Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth after handling contaminated items.**

For more information on pandemic influenza, visit the MCHD website at [http://health.montcopa.org](http://health.montcopa.org) or contact the Montgomery County Health Department at 610-278-5117.