

# Infection prevention is in your hands

Handwashing is one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself or your loved ones with lupus. We do it every day, but are we doing it right?

People with lupus are especially prone to infection caused by germs like viruses and bacteria. Knowing how to wash your hands properly and knowing when to wash your hands is key to avoiding infections for people with lupus. This is because lupus (and some of the medications used to treat lupus) makes people even more prone to infection caused by germs like viruses and bacteria.

**Below are the five steps everyone should follow, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**

- Wet your hands with running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
- Lather the backs of your hands with soap; get between your fingers and under your nails too!
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? CDC recommends you hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice, from beginning to end.
- Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

**The CDC recommends that everyone wash their 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

If you have lupus, or if you are close to someone with lupus, remember that preventing infection may literally be in your hands.