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GLOBAL WATERS



Photo credit: USAID/Indonesia, IUWASH PLUS

Photo Essay: Global Handwashing Day 2018: Clean Hands — A Recipe for Health

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Combining the right ingredients — water and soap — with the right utensils — like handwashing stations, sinks, tippy taps, buckets and towels — creates a recipe for handwashing that stops the spread of germs and diseases. At 2017 Global Handwashing Day celebrations in Sulawesi, Indonesia, USAID's Indonesia Urban Water, Sanitation, Hygiene *Penyehatan Lingkungan untuk Semua* (IUWASH PLUS) program helped local primary school teachers and students make successful hand washing their best new habit.



Photo credit: Save the Children, Unilever/Lifebuoy

Studies have found a direct link between increased handwashing and improved overall health. USAID's recipe for health focuses on increasing the practice of handwashing with soap, safely disposing of feces, managing safe drinking water, and practicing safe food hygiene. All of these behaviors start at home, which is why it is important for parents to teach them to their children. Here, a mother in Afghanistan participates in a USAID training that emphasizes the importance of handwashing.



Photo credit: Fintrac, Inc., USAID/Cambodia

This year's Global Handwashing Day theme links handwashing with food safety and encourages families to make handwashing a part of their meal. Emerging evidence points to the likely importance of a household's overall hygienic environment for reducing disease and improving nutrition, especially among children. USAID promotes practicing proper handwashing during three critical junctures related to food: before preparing food, before eating, and before feeding others in order to prevent foodborne illnesses and keep families healthy. These junctures are emphasized and promoted during nutrition activities and demonstrations, such as this one in Cambodia that links improved food production with better child nutrition.



Photo credit: Armando Barreno, USAID/Guatemala Water Quality for All initiative

Promoting handwashing and hygiene behaviors in schools can be as simple as providing handwashing stations with soap near toilets and practicing handwashing as a group at set times, like before lunch. It's important to keep practices inclusive and simple so that they motivate people even at a young age to form healthy habits.



Photo credit: Global Communities, USAID DREAMS Partnership

Students like these DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) participants in Kenya serve as both advocates and models for improved handwashing behaviors. Schools are great places to introduce and improve health and hygiene techniques. Schools often, however, lack basic materials such as handwashing stations and soap. Empowering adolescent girls and young women with the right ingredients (supplies) and recipes (messages) improves individual and family health outcomes while unlocking their educational potential.



Photo credit: Rakesh Katal, USAID Food For Peace Development Food Security Assistance, Nobo Jatra Project

How does USAID measure success in improving hygiene? Through a mixture of conducting research to identify consumer and household preferences, needs, and barriers to behavior change, and facilitating the availability of multiple product choices that support improved hygiene behaviors. With a little bit of practice, a young girl in Bangladesh learns the importance of handwashing during a USAID Food For Peace demonstration.

By Claire Hubert



Additional Resources:

- [Global Handwashing Day](#)
- [Global Handwashing Partnership](#)
- [Global Waters Radio: Nga Nguyen and Reshmaan Hussam on Incentivizing Handwashing Habit Formation](#)
- [Globalwaters.org: Sanitation and Hygiene](#)

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