

## Hand washing is very effective in preventing diarrhoea

<b>Clinical question</b>	How effective is hand washing in preventing diarrhoea in children and adults?
<b>Bottom line</b>	Hand washing can reduce diarrhoea episodes by about 30% in institutions in high-income countries and in communities in low-income or middle-income countries. Hand washing is particularly important after defaecation and handling faeces, and before preparing and eating food.
<b>Caveat</b>	Trials with longer follow-up (more than 12 months) and that test different methods of promoting hand washing are needed.
<b>Context</b>	Diarrhoea is a serious global public health problem, particularly in low-income and middle-income countries. The World Health Organization estimates that over three million episodes occur each year, with many people dying, especially children aged less than five years in low-income and middle-income countries.
<b>Cochrane Systematic Review</b>	Ejemont RI et al. Hand washing for preventing diarrhoea. Cochrane Reviews 2008, Issue 1. Art No: CD004265. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD004265.pub2. This review contains 14 trials involving 17,465 participants.
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