

Hand washing is the single most important prevention step for reducing disease transmission.

### **How to Wash Hands**

1. Wet hands with running water; place soap in palms; rub together to make a lather; scrub hands vigorously for 20 seconds; rinse soap off hands; then dry hands with a disposable towel.
2. If possible, turn off the faucet by using a disposable towel.
3. Assist young children with washing their hands.

### **Hand-Washing Facilities or Stations**

- Hand-washing facilities should be accessible and sufficient for the maximum anticipated attendance, and configured for use by children, adults, and those with disabilities.
- Hands should always be washed after leaving animal areas and before eating or drinking.
- Hand-washing stations should be conveniently located between animal and nonanimal areas and in food concession areas.
- Maintenance should include routine cleaning and restocking of towels and soap.
- Running water should be of sufficient volume and pressure to remove soil from hands. Volume and pressure might be substantially reduced if the water supply is furnished from a holding tank. Therefore, a permanent pressured water supply is preferable.
- The hand-washing unit should be designed so that both hands are free for hand washing.
- Hot water is preferable, but if the hand-washing stations are supplied with only cold water, a soap that emulsifies easily in cold water should be provided.

#### **BOX 1. Hand-washing recommendations to reduce disease transmission from animals in public settings**

- Communal basins, where water is used by more than one person, do not constitute adequate hand-washing facilities.

### **Hand-Washing Agents**

- Liquid soap dispensed by a hand or foot pump is recommended.
- Alcohol-based hand-sanitizers are effective against multiple common disease agents (e.g., *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Campylobacter*) when soap and water are not available. However, they are ineffective against certain organisms (i.e., bacterial spores, *Cryptosporidium*, and certain viruses).
- Hand-sanitizers are less effective if hands are visibly soiled. Therefore, visible contamination and dirt should be removed to the extent possible before using hand-sanitizers.

### **Hand-Washing Signs**

At venues where human-animal contact occurs, signs regarding proper hand-washing practices are critical to reduce

disease transmission.

- Signs that are reminders to wash hands should be posted at exits from animal areas.
- Signs should direct visitors and animal handlers to hand-washing stations.
- Signs with proper hand-washing instructions should be posted at hand-washing stations and restrooms to encourage proper practices.
- Hand-washing signs should be placed in food concession areas.

### **How**

- Wet hands with running water
- Place soap into palms
- Rub together to make a lather
- Scrub hands vigorously for 20 seconds
- Rinse soap off of hands
- Dry hands

### **Example of a Hand-Washing Sign**

#### **Directions for Washing Hands**

#### **When**

- After going to the toilet
- After exiting animal areas
- Before eating
- Before preparing foods