



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA STATEMENT

HANDWASHING SAVES LIVES

11 October 2018

South Africans will join the world in celebrating Global Handwashing Day (GHD) on 15 October 2018. Annually Global Handwashing Day is celebrated on 15 October as a way to remind the people of the importance of washing hands with soap. Global Handwashing Day is an annual global advocacy day dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding about the importance of handwashing with soap as an easy, effective and affordable way to prevent diseases. GHD is meant to raise awareness about the benefits of handwashing with soap and foster and support a global and local culture of handwashing.

This year the Global Handwashing Day is celebrated under the theme “**Clean hands – a recipe for health**” and focuses on the links between handwashing and food including food hygiene and nutrition. Handwashing at critical times, especially before cooking, eating or feeding others is one of the most important ways to keep food clean and safe, prevent diseases and help children grow strong. Connecting handwashing to an existing habit like a meal is a great way to form proper handwashing habits. The theme is basically a reminder to everyone to make handwashing a part of every meal.

Handwashing, especially with soap is critical to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Hands are the most common highways to the transmissions and spread of bacteria and viruses that cause diseases, food-borne illness, diarrheal infections resulting in people being hospitalized for treatment and at worst death. Hands are the most common way of transporting and spreading germs, so it is crucial to wash our hands with soap at all critical times to prevent the spread of diseases and create a brighter future for all, especially our kids.

Everyone has a role in promoting handwashing with soap and prevent the spread of diseases. Play your part in ensuring a healthy nation by washing your hands with soap at critical times, especially before eating, cooking or feeding others, model good handwashing behavior and remind or help others to always wash their hands before eating, make handwashing part of your family meals, establish places to wash your hands in household, in your community, schools and workplaces, and promote effective handwashing behavior change at all times.



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