Hand hygiene: Guidance for communities

The COVID-19 virus primarily spreads through droplet and contact transmission. Contact transmission means by touching infected people and/or contaminated objects or surfaces. Thus, your hands can spread the virus to other surfaces and/or to your mouth, nose or eyes if you touch them.

- Hand Hygiene is one of the most effective actions you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus.
- Community members can play a critical role in fighting COVID-19 by adopting frequent hand hygiene as part of their day-to-day practices.
- You should wash your hands:
  - After coughing or sneezing, even when you use tissue paper
  - Anytime you come from outside and before touching anything in your home
  - Before eating, either at home or outside
  - After visiting the toilet or public places
  - After using public transport
  - After looking after or touching a sick person
  - When your hands are visibly dirty
  - When you have touched dirty or contaminated surfaces
- Hand washing should be done with soap and water for 40 to 60 seconds.
- If soap and water are not available, hand-rub can be conducted for 20-30 seconds with hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol and is certified.
- Community members should encourage hand washing and have hand washing stands at schools, restaurants, and other public places.