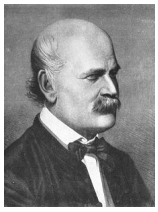

Over a hundred years ago, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis noticed that maternity patients were dying at an alarming rate. He made the connection that the patients were being treated by students who had just finished working on cadavers! After insisting that the students wash their hands before treating the mothers, the number of deaths decreased fivefold.

It is estimated that one out of three people don’t wash their hands after using the restroom. If you don’t properly clean your hands, you pick up germs and contaminate yourself and others. It is important to keep in mind that you can catch something more severe than the common cold. You may be spreading or catching something as serious as hepatitis A, meningitis, various strains of influenza or infectious diarrhea.

The single most effective way to prevent the spread of infectious disease is hand washing. It is especially important to wash up during the following circumstances:

- Before, during, and after food preparation
- Before and after eating
- After using the bathroom
- After handling animals or animal waste
- When someone at your work or home is sick

As a general recommendation, it’s most effective to wash your hands completely with warm water and soap for a minimum of 30 seconds. Take the few extra seconds to wash your hands thoroughly and stop the spread of disease.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention