



# Global Handwashing Day: Let's Make Our Future Generation Protected

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Advancement in field of healthcare have improved awareness and lifestyle of people. In this era of globalization, with invention of various antibiotics there has been steep decline in occurrence of communicable diseases. But in majority of under-developed and developing countries mortality due to diarrhoea, gastro-intestinal diseases still persist. Diarrhoeal disease is the second leading cause of death in children under five years old, and is responsible for killing around 525,000 children every year.<sup>1</sup> WHO guidelines for treatment of pneumonia and diarrhoea emphasis "handwashing with soap" as one of the integral part of 'PROTECT, PREVENT AND TREAT FRAMEWORK' for diarrhoea and pneumonia.<sup>2</sup> Thus this preventive strategy is advocated worldwide by celebrating "Global hand washing day" on 15<sup>th</sup> October every year where children as well as adults are taught about proper hand washing technique and its benefits.

Global Handwashing Day (GHD) is a campaign to motivate and mobilize people around the world to protect from diseases. It was initially started by "Global handwashing partnership and later adopted by UNICEF, USAID. It basically aims to educated children about Washing hands at critical points during the day and washing with soap. Thus the purpose of celebrating this day is "to raise awareness about benefits of handwashing with soap in every society and country, to Foster and support a general culture of handwashing with soap and to Shine a spotlight on the state of handwashing in each country".<sup>2</sup>

First handwashing day took place in sweden on 15 October 2008 with school children as its target population. The year 2008 was also designated as 'INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SANITATION' and in order to reinforce hygiene practises global handwashing day started celebrated every year. In 2008, 70 countries joined this event and in India apart from government organizations various sports persons, social activists and bollywood celebrities through rallies, advertisement raise awareness about importance of handwashing with

soap. On first global handwashing day in India, it was estimated that more than 100 million school children participated and took pledge to wash hands before meal, after sanitation and after playing.

In developing countries like India which spend only about 1.3% of GDP on health, preventive strategies like hand washing with soap seems to be a excellent intervention to combat various diseases. Handwashing with soap works by interrupting the transmission of disease as unwashed hands often act as vectors that carry disease-causing pathogens commuting from person to person.. thus if hands are not washed during critical periods like after contacting with human or animal faeces, bodily fluids like nasal excretions, and contaminated foods, vectors like bacteria, viruses and parasites can reach to unwitting hosts.<sup>3</sup>

Handwashing is a cornerstone of public health, and new hygienic behaviours and sanitary services had prevented humans from various communicable diseases like diarrheal diseases, respiratory diseases. Handwashing with soap is also a formidable ally in efforts to combat a host of other illnesses, such as helminths (worms), eye infections like trachoma and skin infections like impetigo. Also, 'Handwashing with soap is the single-most cost-effective health intervention has been shown to be the most effective way to avert DALYs associated with diarrheal diseases'.<sup>4</sup>

This year, on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018 do spread awareness about handwashing benefits specially to our future generation so that they can prevent themselves from various diseases. Also these four fundamental facts should be known to every individual: a) washing hands with water alone is not sufficient and soap should always be used. b) Handwashing with soap can prevent diseases that kill millions of children every year. c) The critical moments for handwashing with soap are after using the toilet or cleaning a child and before handling food. d) Handwashing with soap is the single most cost-effective health intervention.<sup>5</sup>

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