

The Use of Alcohol-base Hand Sanitizers

Summary: Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be effective when used for hand hygiene. They may be safely and effectively used if guidelines are followed.

Purpose: In general, if hands are visibly soiled, soap and water should be used for hand hygiene. In other circumstances, the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be as effective as soap and water. In the case of younger students who may not thoroughly wash, rinse and dry hands, the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be more effective than and preferable to the use of soap and water when hands are not visibly soiled. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers must be at least 60 percent alcohol to be effective. The use of other types of cleansers is not recommended. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective in removing nut allergens from surfaces.

Guidelines for Use: Hand hygiene with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be done frequently, and especially at the following times –

Before:

- Preparing food or eating
- Inserting or removing contact lenses
- Rendering first aid or treating a person who is ill
- Administering medication or completing a medical procedure

After:

- Any contact with blood, body fluids or soiled objects
- Using the toilet
- Assisting with personal hygiene, such as changing diapers
- Touching animals or animal waste
- Food preparation, especially after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
- Blowing your nose, using a tissue or coughing or sneezing into your hands
- Treating or touching open wounds or a person who is sick or injured
- After handling trash or garbage
- After playing outdoors

Hand sanitizers should not be ingested.

Hand sanitizers are flammable. Do not use while smoking or near open flame

Reference: *School Closure Guidance*. Developed by the Ohio Department of Health in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education.