



# Newsletter

January 2017  
Issue 13, Vol. 1



**Wash** Your Hands  
**Nursing Talk**  
**AND MORE...**

# Wash Your Hands



*Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick.*

Handwashing is easy to do and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of many types of infection and illness in all settings—from your home and workplace to child care facilities and hospitals. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community.

## When should you wash your hands?

Feces (poop) from people or animals is an important source of germs. A single gram of human feces—which is about the weight of a paper clip—can contain one trillion germs. Help stop the spread of germs by washing your hands often, especially during key times listed below.

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet

- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- After touching garbage

## What is the right way to wash your hands?

Follow the five steps below to wash your hands the right way every time.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.

- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

This video [<http://www.cdc.gov/cdctv/healthyliving/hygiene/fight-germs-wash-hands.html>] can also help you learn how to wash your hands the right way.

Why? Read the science behind the recommendations [<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-handwashing.html>].

## What should you do if you don't have soap and clean, running water?

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of germs on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do NOT eliminate all types of germs.

Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy. Furthermore, hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals like pesticides and heavy

## BACK HOME IN ILLINOIS

Dear Cassandra,

In 2013 I wrote a letter to you. I had read and heard about the oil boom in the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota. The area had become the country's second-largest producer of oil, surpassing Alaska and following Texas. In 2013, there were 8,300 wells and 186 drilling rigs.

The oil in the Bakken shale formation is removed by hydraulic fracturing called "fracking" and horizontal drilling. Drilling requires rig workers, heavy equipment operators, truck drivers, and general laborers. In addition, there had been a tremendous growth in the service industry including workers in restaurants, hotels, and hospitals. There were many unfilled jobs for oil field workers, truck drivers, sales clerks, clerical workers, and hospital staff.

Williston, North Dakota, was the epicenter of the oil boom. The population had been 14,715 in 2010. The population had grown to 41,500 by 2013. Jobs were plentiful and paid well. Oil field workers could earn \$90,000 a year. Starting pay at Walmart was \$17.00 an hour.

Does this all sound wonderful? Well, consider this. Temperatures frequently drop to twenty degrees below zero in the winters. Housing was scarce. A one bedroom apartment, if you could find one, was \$1,000 a month. Workers paid \$800 a month to park a camper in someone's yard just outside the city limits. Many oil field workers lived in crew camps called "man camps." These attached modular units had dorm-like bedrooms and shared cafeteria, television rooms, weight rooms, and computer centers. No alcohol, drugs, or weapons were allowed. The walk in rate at Solsten Hotel, a 343 bed man camp, was \$95.00 a night including meals.

Mercy Medical Center, a twenty-five bed critical access medical facility, employed 450 people. The previous year, the turnover rate was forty percent compared to seventeen percent in 2010 when the staff totaled 490. At the same time, the medical staff was treating more patients and seeing more severe

*Continues on page 4*

# Wash Your Hands

*Continued from page 2*

metals from hands. Be cautious when using hand sanitizers around children; swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if a person swallows more than a couple mouthfuls.

### How do you use hand sanitizers?

- Apply the product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

Why? Read the science behind the recommendations [<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html>].

For more information on handwashing, please visit CDC's Handwashing website. You can also call 1-800-CDC-INFO or contact CDC-INFO for answers to specific questions.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/handwashing/index.html>

### More Information

#### CDC's Handwashing Work

- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives [<http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>]
- Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings [<http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene>]
- Water-related Hygiene [<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/index.html>]
- Hand Hygiene to Help Prevent Flu [<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/habits.htm>]
- Hand Hygiene During an Emergency [<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/sanitation.asp>]
- Hand Hygiene Aboard Ships [<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/vsp/pub/Handwashing/HandwashingTips.htm>]

## WINTER DRIVING TIPS



When snow and ice cover the streets, your first impulse each morning is to crawl back under the covers. Who wants to think about shoveling the driveway or scraping ice off the windshield of a vehicle parked outside on the street? Who wants to sit in a cold car? Nevertheless, you have to go to work.

Maybe you could call in sick. What will you tell the boss? What excuse can you give? Could you lie and say your car won't start? No, you've used that excuse before. Could you say you have a terrible fever? How high? You could say 109 degrees. You don't know that

the highest fever someone can have before suffering severe brain damage is 108. Your boss, a nursing supervisor, would know that.

Well, what other excuse could you use? Blame an insect. You could say, "I got stung by a bee." No, don't use that one. Remember your boss, the nursing supervisor, knows about allergic reactions and EpiPens. How about, "I think I have the swine flu." Are you stupid? You are talking to a nurse! Try, "I have the hiccups." No, not that excuse either. She will have a thousand cures for hiccups.

It might just be easier to go in to work.

*Continues on page 4*

# WINTER DRIVING TIPS

*Continued from page 3*

Besides, you don't want to start the day lying to your boss. Even little kids know telling a lie is wrong. Don't you remember chanting "Liar, liar, pants on fire. Nose as long as a telephone wire."

AAA, formerly known as the American Automobile Association, recommends the following **winter driving tips**:

- Avoid driving while you're fatigued. Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks.
- Never run a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- Make certain your tires are properly inflated.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full.
- If possible, avoid using your parking brake in cold, rainy and snowy weather.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).
- Always look and steer where you want to go.
- Use your seat belt every time you get into your vehicle.

## Tips for driving in the snow:

Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is the best method for regaining traction and avoiding skids. Don't try to get moving in a hurry. And take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.

Drive slowly. Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads. Accelerating, stopping, turning—nothing happens as quickly as on dry pavement. Give yourself time to maneuver by driving slowly.

The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should be increased to eight to ten seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.

Know your brakes. If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS) and need to slow down quickly, press hard on the pedal. It's normal for the pedal to vibrate a bit when the ABS is activated. In cars without ABS, use "threshold" braking, keeping your heel on the floorboard and using the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.

Don't stop if you can avoid it. There's a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to



start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling. If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it.

Don't power up hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads just starts your wheels spinning. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill as slowly as possible.

Don't stop going up a hill. There's nothing worse than trying to get moving up a hill on an icy road. Get some inertia going on a flat roadway before you take on the hill.

Stay home. If you really don't have to go out, don't. Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can. Don't tempt fate: If you don't have somewhere you have to be, watch the snow from indoors.

To see a YouTube video by AAA, go to Tips for Safe Winter Driving at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5LkTkW3TDY>.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are unable to access a video by using the link, type the name of the video into your search engine.

# Nursing Talk

*Continued from page 3*

trauma cases involving those in high-risk drilling jobs than it did just a few years prior to 2013.

At the time I was a pediatric private duty nurse at American Home Health. I owned my home, and I had a comfortable life here. However, I was intrigued by this boom, and I wanted to be a part of it. I asked you what you thought.

You said that you would stay here and tough it out. You also said that if I liked adventure and could afford to go, I could try it for six months. You told me not to sell my house. You said I should have a job lined up before I went to North Dakota. You recommended that I ask if the employer owns houses or apartments employees can rent. You told me to take plenty of money with me. Finally, you said that, above all, I should have an exit strategy, just in case I discovered that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence.

Well, I decided to go. Mercy Medical Center in Williston was desperately looking for nurses, and I was hired before I left Chicago. As an essential service employee of Mercy Medical Center in Williston, I was eligible to rent an apartment in the Mercy Medical Housing complex within walking distance from downtown Williston, the Post Office, and a local movie theatre. These one bedroom apartments ranged from \$507--700 a month, much less than the traditional apartments in Williston.

I rented out my house in Chicago to a nice young couple. I remembered your advice and took plenty of money with me to North Dakota.

When I got there in 2013, the price of crude oil was \$100 a barrel. Times were good. New schools, new roads, new houses, and new apartments were being built. Then in 2014 the price of oil began to fall. By September of 2015 it had fallen to \$30 a barrel. New drilling dried up, and many workers have been laid off. Some laid off workers moved back home. Hotels are half booked. There is a surplus of apartments and new homes. Restaurants are struggling to stay open. Williston has taken on \$215 million in debt for improvements to infrastructure during the oil boom.

Earlier this year I decided to move back to Chicago. I live in my old house, and I'm

*Continues on page 5*

# CAR INSURANCE RATES INCREASE IN 2016



Before you open your next six-month premium notice for your car, sit down. You are going to be shocked and dismayed at the new amount you will have to pay for insurance on your vehicle. The increases range from 10 percent to 25 percent and more.

Even if you have a clean driving record and have had no claims within the past three years, you can expect a significant rate increase. **Why are premiums increasing so much?**

Several factors are responsible for this increase in premiums. In an article called "Car Insurance Rates Are Going Up," Consumer Reports explains it this way: "While the long-term trend shows that the number of accidents is declining, the average payout on the accidents that do occur is rising. From 2005 to 2013 (the latest data available), the number of claims for bodily injury fell 14.5 percent, according to the Insurance Research Council, yet the average cost per payout rose 32 percent, to more than \$15,500."

Another factor is the current financial climate of low interest rates. Insurance companies rely on their invested premiums to generate money. When interest rates are low, the return on the invested money is diminished. Therefore, the insurance company must increase premiums.

**What can you do to reduce your premiums?** If you are age 50 or older, you could take the AARP Safe Driver course either in a

classroom or online. The price for the online class is \$19.95 for AARP members or \$24.95 for non-members. The online class is eight hours of instruction. The student has 60 days to complete the class.

According to the AARP Web site, you will learn

- Important facts about the effects of medications on driving
- How to reduce driver distractions
- How to maintain proper following distance behind another car
- Proper use of safety belts, air bags, anti-lock brakes, and new technology found in cars today
- Techniques for handling left-turns, right-of-way, and roundabouts
- Age-related physical changes and how to adjust your driving to compensate.

According to the AARP Web site, you could be eligible for a multi-year discount on your insurance premium on your car insurance by taking the class. A State Farm customer age 50 or older can reduce his premium by 15% by taking the class. Ask your own insurance carrier what discount is available.

Go to <http://www.aarpdriversafety.org> for more information.

## Nursing Talk

*Continued from page 4*

looking for a job as a pediatric private duty nurse. Do you have any openings?

Sincerely,

*Glad To Be Back*

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Glad To Be Back,

Welcome back! Yes, we do have openings for pediatric private duty nurses. Call or e-mail Edward Lara, Director of Human Resources and Finance, to make arrangements to update your personnel file. The phone number is (630) 236-3501. His e-mail is [edward.lara@ahhc-1.com](mailto:edward.lara@ahhc-1.com).

*Cassandra*

We invite you to submit questions for this column. E-mail [edward.lara@ahhc-1.com](mailto:edward.lara@ahhc-1.com).

### AHHC Newsletter

**Editor(s):** Edward Lara

**Designer(s):** Edward Lara

**Contributions:** Edward Lara &  
Karen Centowski

**For Contributions,**

*E-Mail:* [edward.lara@ahhc-1.com](mailto:edward.lara@ahhc-1.com)

*Write:* 1660 N. Farnsworth Ave., Suite 3  
Aurora • IL • 60505

# WANTED 478 PEOPLE

TO READ THE BLOG EACH WEEK

MUST BE CURIOUS, INTELLIGENT,  
THOUGHTFUL INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE OPEN TO  
NEW IDEAS. LEARN NEW NURSING PROCE-  
DURES, COLLECT RECIPES, READ  
MONEY-SAVING TIPS, WATCH VIDEOS, ENJOY  
RERUNS OF LETTERS TO CASSANDRA,  
AND MORE.

JOIN the hundreds of nurses, office staff,  
family members, and the general public.  
Become a faithful reader of the American  
Home Health blog at [www.ahhc-1.com](http://www.ahhc-1.com).

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CALL 1-630-236-3501.

