



Southeastern Idaho Public Health

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Hand Sanitizer Can Be Effective Against COVID-19

When shopping for hand sanitizer, make sure you choose a sanitizer that contains between 60-95% alcohol. Also, when you use hand sanitizer, make sure you use it the right way. Just like when washing with soap and water, you need to make sure you cover your hands fully (including between your knuckles, wrists, palms, back of your hand and your fingernails), rub it in for at least 20 seconds so it's truly effective. Allow the sanitizer to dry completely before touching anything. "Just putting a little dollop in the palm of your hand and wiping quickly isn't enough, said Maggie Mann, Southeastern Idaho Public Health District Director. "You need to use enough to cover your hands. Sanitizers are most effective when your hands aren't visibly dirty."

There are many times you should use hand sanitizer, such as before and after touching a surface other people have touched. It's wise to use sanitizer after you've pushed a cart around the store, after filling your vehicle with fuel, after handling money, and after touching door handles.

For children under six years of age, hand sanitizer should be used with adult supervision. When used according to the directions on the Drug Facts Label, hand sanitizer is not dangerous for children.

Many retail stores and pharmacies sell hand sanitizers. However, we understand that many stores have run out of hand sanitizers and they may be difficult to find. The Food and Drug Administration does not recommend that consumers make hand sanitizer. If made incorrectly, hand sanitizer can be ineffective, and there have been reports of skin burns from homemade hand sanitizer.

The best and most consistent way of preventing the spread of the coronavirus – and reducing your risk of contracting it – remains washing your hands with soap and water as a first choice, and avoiding touching your face. "Remember, hand sanitizers won't get rid of all germs on your hands," said Mann. "However, hand sanitizer is a good option when you are not near a sink."

For more information about COVID-19, call SIPH's hotline at 208.234.5875; visit siphidaho.org or watch SIPH's Facebook Live, Monday – Friday at 11:00 a.m.