




**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

Steven L. Beshear
Governor

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MEMORANDUM

Janie Miller
Secretary

To: All Local Health Departments; All Public and Environmental Health Directors and Staff,
Nursing and EPI staff;
And School Superintendents

From: Guy F. Delius, R.S., Director, 
Division of Public Health Protection & Safety

Date: September 1, 2009

Subject: Hand Sanitizer in Schools.

The Following information relates to use of hand sanitizers in Kentucky schools. In March 2009, this office has issued guidance for use of "Toxic Items in Schools", which included hand sanitizers. This guidance was released due to the risks associated with the use or abuse of some toxic items, including hand sanitizers. With the occurrence of H1N1 this year, and the heightened need of "clean hands", our guidance is being revised, to allow a more liberal use of hand sanitizers during this event. The use of hand sanitizers can be an effective tool in maintaining clean hands and minimizing the spread of disease, when used in conjunction with proper hand washing.

Proper hand washing using warm water, soap and sanitary towels is the best method to clean hands and combat illness. According to the CDC, "**hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of infection.**" Washing ones hands with warm water and soap vigorously for 15-20 seconds and drying them with a paper towel or hand dryer is preferred. Teachers and children should take regular breaks to wash their hands and bathrooms should be checked often to ensure that soap and paper towels are available at all times. Students and faculty should wash hands when hands are visibly soiled; before eating; after using the bathroom; after handling animals or their waste; after recess; after sneezing, etc.

The use of hand sanitizers can be an effective alternative to maintaining clean hands and minimizing the spread of disease, when soap and water are not readily available. During the Pandemic our guidance will temporarily allow the use of hand sanitizers between times of routine hand washing, for grades 4-12. Hand sanitizers are best used with supervision, but may be used by students in these grades if the school system permits. Care should be taken to follow all instructions and warnings on the product labels. Along with the benefits of hand sanitizers there is a risk of abuse or misuse of these products so use is recommended in accordance with manufacturer's requirements.



At this time the use of hand sanitizers for children in K-3rd grade or children that may have physical and developmental disabilities should be practiced with supervised use only, and the products should be locked away from these children when not in use.

If you have any questions regarding the use of hand sanitizers, please contact your local health department environmental health professional office or Ms. Vonja Grabeel at the Kentucky Department for Public Health's Environmental Management Branch at (502) 564-7398.