

Hot or Not? Water Temperature May Not Matter When It Comes to Washing Your Hands

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Washing one's hands in cool water removed the same amount of bacteria as doing so in warm water, according to a study published June 2017 in the *Journal of Food Protection*. High levels of a nonpathogenic bacteria were placed on the hands of 20 participants several times during a six-month study period, and subjects were asked to wash their hands using either a "bland" (nonantimicrobial) soap or an antimicrobial soap under water heated to 60°F, 79°F, and 100°F. No significant differences in bacterial burden were observed with the temperatures. Antimicrobial soap also showed no significant reduction in bacteria compared with bland soap. Because a large part of the data's variability was due to the behaviors of the individual participants, the authors said, learning "what behaviors and human factors most influence hand washing may help researchers find techniques to optimize the effectiveness of hand washing."

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