

Can Washing Your Hands With Cold Water Kill Bacteria?

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Do you scald your hands lathering up with hot water to kill germs? Well, here's some news that may help stave off injury. Washing your hands with soap and cold water, for as little as 10 seconds, can eliminate bacteria, according to recent findings published in the Journal of Food Protection, reports [Medical News Today](#).

For the study, researchers at Rutgers University–New Brunswick reviewed data from 20 participants—10 men and 10 women—to compare the effects of washing hands with either hot or cold water. Additionally, scientists factored in soap volume, water temperature, lather time and the effectiveness of the soap used.

During a six-month period, scientists asked individuals to wash their hands with water at different temperatures: 60.8°, 78.8° and 100.4° Fahrenheit (16°, 26° and 38° Celsius). Additionally, the volume of the soap varied (0.5 milliliters, 1 milliliter and 2 milliliters).

Researchers found that water temperature showed no significant effect on bacteria reduction. Moreover, data showed that antimicrobial soap wasn't substantially more potent than regular soap in killing germs.

“People need to feel comfortable when they are washing their hands,” said Donald Schaffner, PhD, one of the study's authors. “But as far as effectiveness [goes], this study shows us that the temperature of the water used didn't matter.”

Currently, the FDA's handwashing regulations state that hot water is required to remove harmful microorganisms. The agency requires water temperature in food service establishments to be 40° Celsius (or between 100° and 108° Fahrenheit). Schaffner believes a policy change is needed in order to conserve the energy eateries use to heat water to unnecessary levels.

In the future, scientists want to research the amount and types of soap that are the most efficacious in getting rid of harmful bacteria.

[Click here](#) to read about why the FDA recommended removing antibacterial ingredients from soaps.

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