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**BROWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ADVISES RESIDENTS
AND VISITORS TO PRACTICE FREQUENT HAND WASHING**

-Hand washing can help prevent illness-

BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA – Broward County Health Department officials are advising residents and visitors to practice frequent and proper hand washing to prevent the spread of diseases that can cause illness.

Germs are spread when people forget to wash their hands or do not wash their hands thoroughly. Basic hygiene is very important in reducing harmful bacteria and viruses from entering the body through their eyes, nose and mouth.

It is important to wash your hands often, even when they are not visibly dirty. Here are some of the times that you should wash your hands:

- Before, during, and after you prepare food, before you eat, after using the restroom, after touching animals or animal waste, after caring for someone who is sick, after changing diapers, after leaving the playground, after blowing your nose or sneezing and coughing and whenever your hands are visibly dirty.

COVER YOUR COUGH -- DO NOT cough or sneeze into your hands.

Cough or sneeze into a tissue and throw the tissue away or cough or sneeze into your elbow to avoid spreading germs with your hands.

Above all, **DO NOT** put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth.

To properly wash your hands, use the following technique:

- Use soap and warm running water or hot water that has cooled or disinfected water.
- Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, back of hands, fingers and under fingernails.
- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds and then rinse.
- Dry with a clean and/or disposable towel.
- Use the towel to turn off the water faucet.

If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used.

Educators and parents can encourage children to participate and excel in hand washing awareness by downloading the "4 Principles of Hand Awareness" at www.henrythehand.com.

For information on services and programs at Broward County Health Department, visit www.browardchd.org

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