



Global Handwashing Day was originally created for children and schools, but can be celebrated by anyone promoting handwashing with soap.

Each year on October 15, over 200 million people are involved in celebrations in over 100 countries around the world. Handwashing with soap is the most effective and inexpensive way to prevent diarrheal and acute respiratory infections, which take the lives of millions of children every year. Yet, despite its lifesaving potential, handwashing with soap is seldom practiced and difficult to promote.

Turning handwashing with soap before eating and after using the toilet into an ingrained habit could save more lives than any single vaccine or medical intervention, cutting deaths from diarrhea by almost half and deaths from acute respiratory infections by one-quarter.

Global Handwashing Day focuses on children because not only do they suffer disproportionately from diarrheal and respiratory diseases and deaths, but research shows that children can also be powerful agents for changing behaviours like handwashing with soap in their communities.

In 2012, Global Handwashing Day will share its 5th anniversary with over 121 million children who are also celebrating their 5th birthday this year. Join the celebration by promoting handwashing with soap and help more children reach their 5th birthday!

**Additional links:**

[Global Handwashing Day website](#)

