

The Continued Role of Hand Hygiene and Cleaning and Disinfection in Schools

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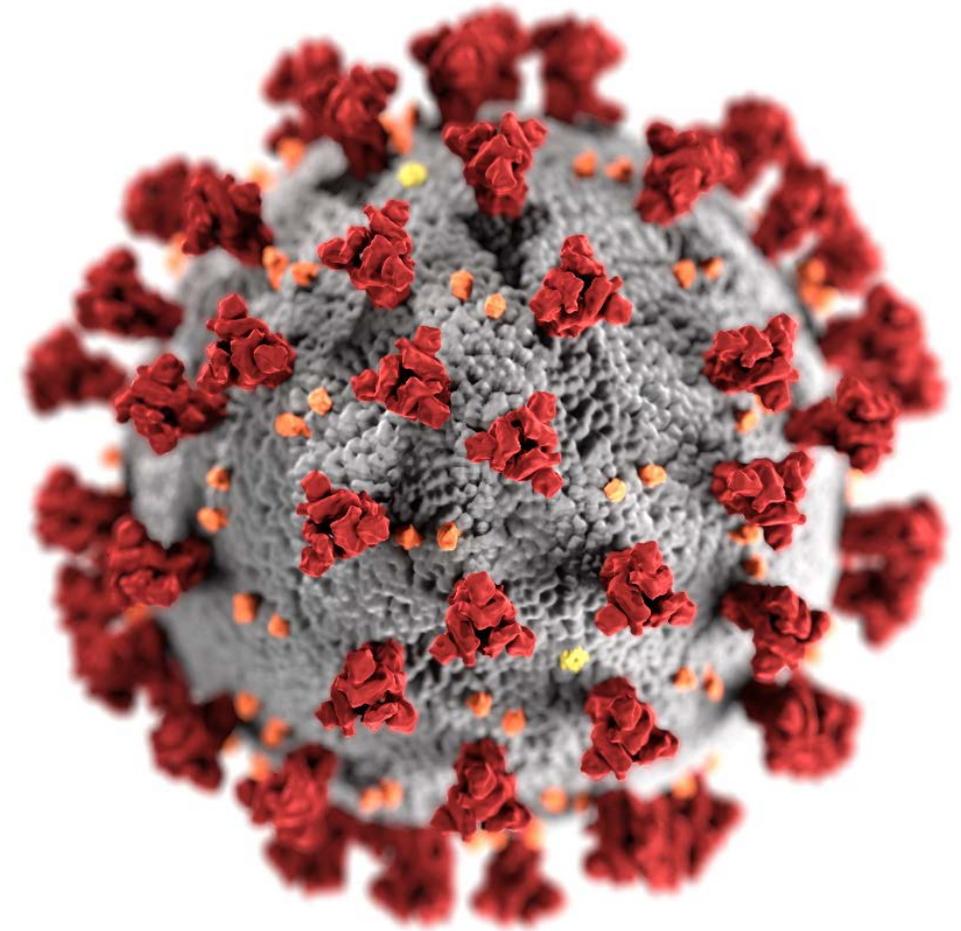
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cdc.gov/coronavirus

COVID-19 Spread



How it spreads

- COVID-19 is spread in three main ways:
 - By breathing when close to an infected person who is exhaling small droplets and particles that contain the virus
 - Having these small droplets and particles that contain virus land on the eyes, nose, or mouth, especially through splashes and sprays like a cough or sneeze
 - Touching eyes, nose, or mouth with hands that have the virus on them

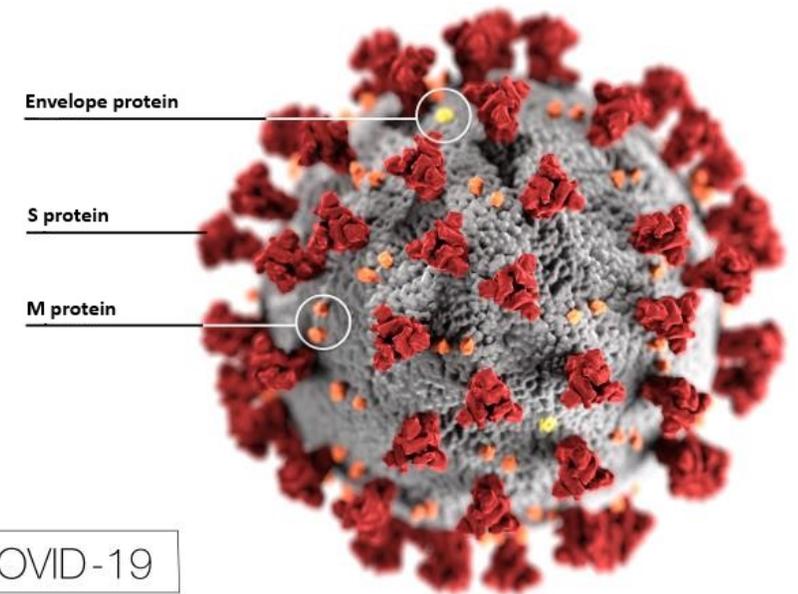


The role of surfaces in transmission

- Direct contact and inhaling aerosols and droplets are more common ways for COVID-19 to spread than through surfaces.
- Respiratory viruses [e.g., coronavirus, influenza virus, and rhinovirus (colds)] have an outer layer (envelope) that can be damaged relatively easily in the environment, especially outdoors.
- Covering coughs and sneezes and cleaning hands are effective for preventing respiratory illness.



Getty Images



COVID-19

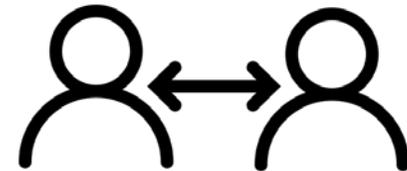


Prevention



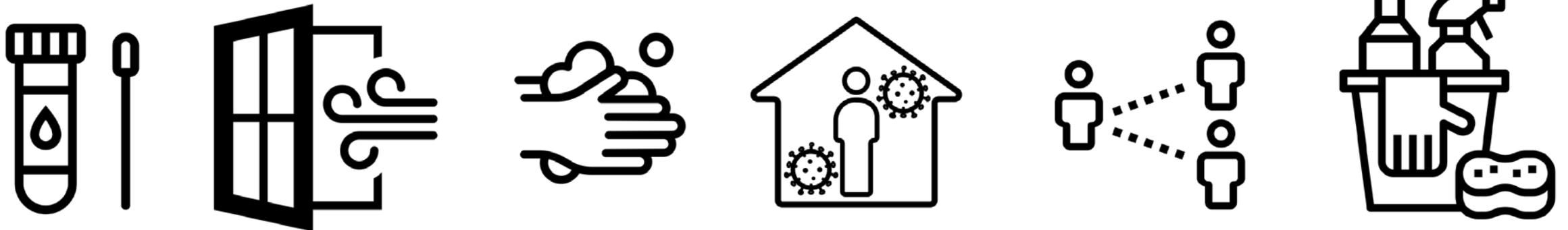
Key prevention strategies in schools

- Promoting vaccination among people 12 years and older
- Universal, consistent and correct mask use indoors among all teachers, staff, students, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of their vaccination status
- Maintaining at least 3 feet of physical distance between students in classrooms



Additional layered prevention strategies in schools

- Screening testing to promptly identify cases, clusters, and outbreaks
- Improved ventilation
- Handwashing and respiratory etiquette
- Staying home when sick and getting tested
- Contact tracing, in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Cleaning and disinfection



Hand Hygiene



5 Steps of Handwashing



- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Teach and Reinforce Hand Hygiene



- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (for staff and children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- To prevent the spread of germs during the COVID-19 pandemic, wash hands at key times:
 - Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
 - Touching your mask
 - Entering and leaving a public place
 - Touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people

Encouraging Handwashing and Maintaining Adequate Supplies

- Provide **opportunities** for students to wash hands.
- Ensure **adequate supplies** are available:
 - Soap and running water
 - Paper towels or air hand dryers
 - Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
 - Tissues
 - No-touch/foot pedal trash cans
 - Disposable masks for those who forget or if one gets dirty



Reinforcing Preventive Messages

Post signs and share messages on how to:

- Slow the spread of germs
- Properly wash hands and use hand sanitizer
- Wearing and removing masks
- Share materials **digitally** by email and on school websites or social media.
- CDC offers **free communication resources** such as images, videos, PSAs, and print ready signs and fact sheets at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/index.html>

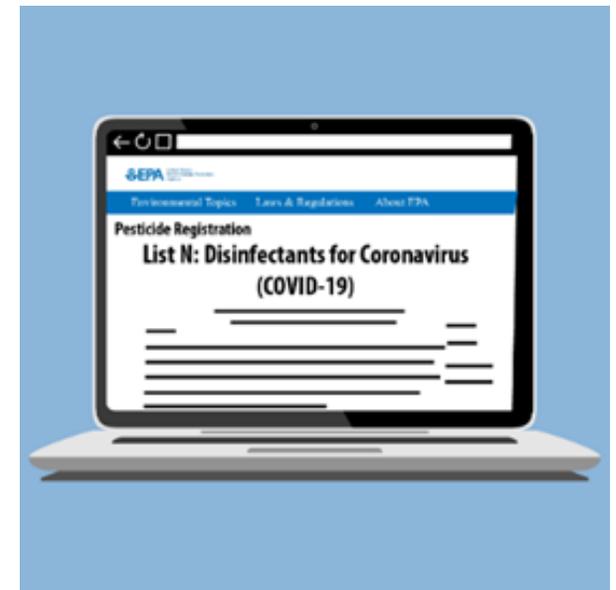


Cleaning and Disinfection



Cleaning versus disinfection

- Clean with surface cleaning products containing soap or detergent
 - To remove dirt and germs
- Disinfect with product registered with EPA's List N when needed
 - To kill germs
- Both cleaning and disinfection can reduce risk of surface transmission



Risk of surface transmission is low

- Risk of infection from touching surfaces is low
- Can further reduce the low risk with:
 - Routine cleaning
 - Hand hygiene
- Disinfection after cleaning is recommended with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 24 hours



General cleaning recommendations for schools



In most situations, cleaning surfaces using soap or detergent (and not disinfecting) is enough.



Mask wearing and practicing hand hygiene also reduce surface transmission.

Cleaning and disinfecting in schools

- In most situations, **cleaning once a day is enough** to reduce any virus present
- If a facility has had a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, **clean AND disinfect** the space
- You may choose to either clean more frequently or disinfect (in addition to cleaning) in high-traffic areas or when certain conditions apply:
 - High transmission of COVID-19 in the community
 - Infrequent hand hygiene
 - People at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19



Cleaning and disinfecting in schools

- Focus your cleaning (or disinfecting, if needed) on high-touch surfaces.
- Ensure cleaning staff are trained and have appropriate personal protective equipment for the products they are using.
- When disinfecting, use EPA List N disinfectants according to the directions on the product label.



Recent Findings





Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Needs Assessment



PTA Needs Assessment Overview

- Web-based survey on implementing recommended hygiene-related activities
- Conducted in July and August 2020 with 2,614 adults affiliated with the National Parent Teacher Association
- Included close-ended and open-ended questions

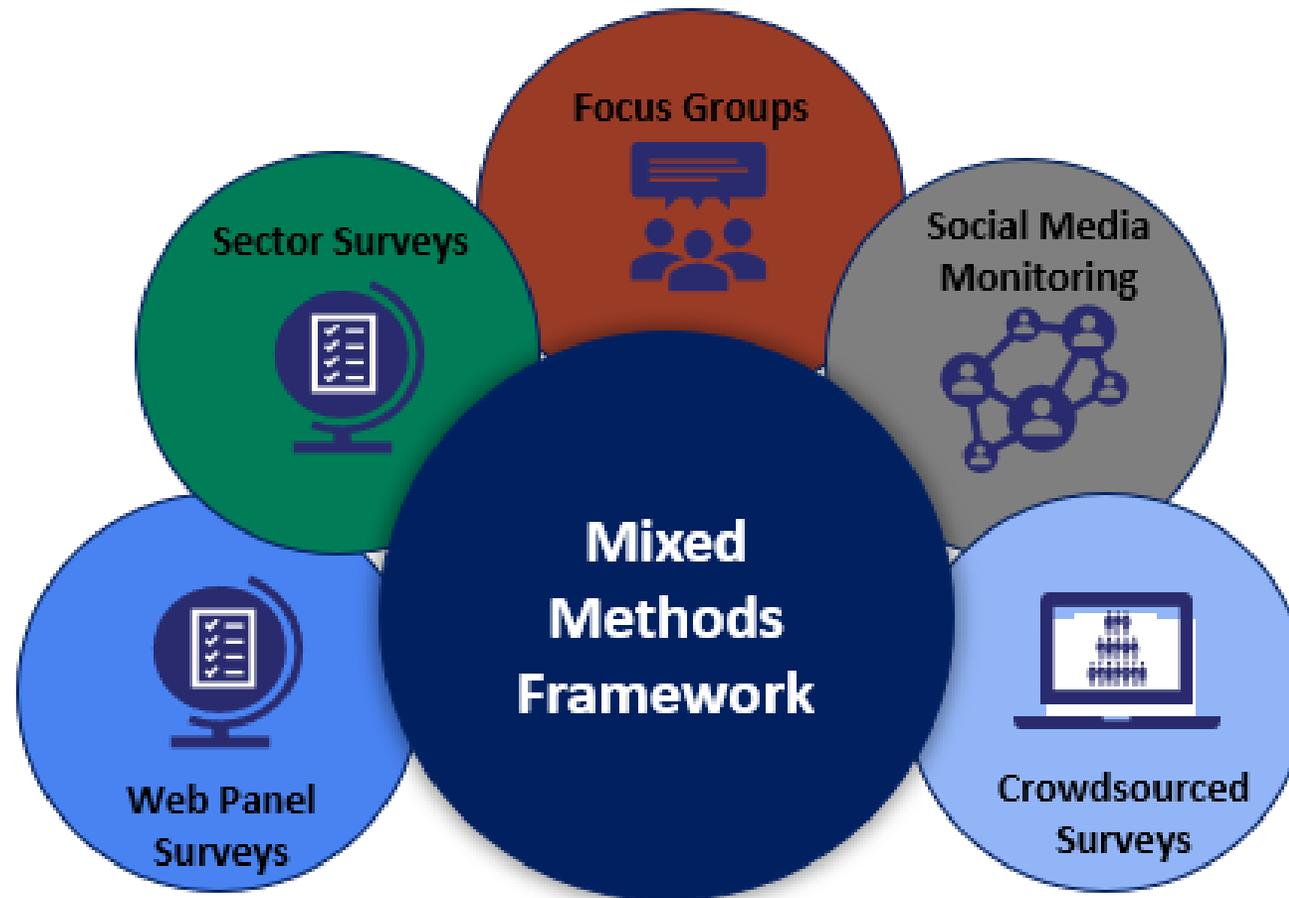
PTA Needs Assessment Results

- Main barriers to **hand hygiene**:
 - Difficulties monitoring students and enforcing hand hygiene
 - Lack of time / scheduling difficulties
 - Lack of funding
 - Lack of training on how to teach hand hygiene
- Main barriers to **cleaning and disinfection**:
 - Staff capacity
 - Lack of time
 - Lack of funding
 - Perception that the activity was unnecessary



Rapid Monitoring and Evaluation of School Mitigation Measures

CDC Foundation Launches Project To Collect Near Real-Time Data On School Mitigation Strategies



Respondents include **teachers, school nurses, parents, students and administrators**

Facilitators



Hand hygiene

- Availability of hand hygiene supplies located at key points
- Signs, public service announcements, and other print and verbal reminders
- Creative lessons to encourage proper hand hygiene among students
- Modeling by peers and teachers



Respiratory Etiquette

- Formal education and verbal reminders helped teach students to cough or sneeze into their elbows or use a tissue
- Signs, PSAs, and other print and verbal reminders
- Modeling by peers and teachers



Enhanced Cleaning

- Availability of cleaning and disinfection supplies

Barriers



Hand hygiene

- Staff oversight and involvement often needed to ensure students practice hand hygiene (some reported that this interfered with their ability to teach effectively)
- Transition times between classes too short to allow for hand hygiene
- Hand hygiene supplies inconveniently located



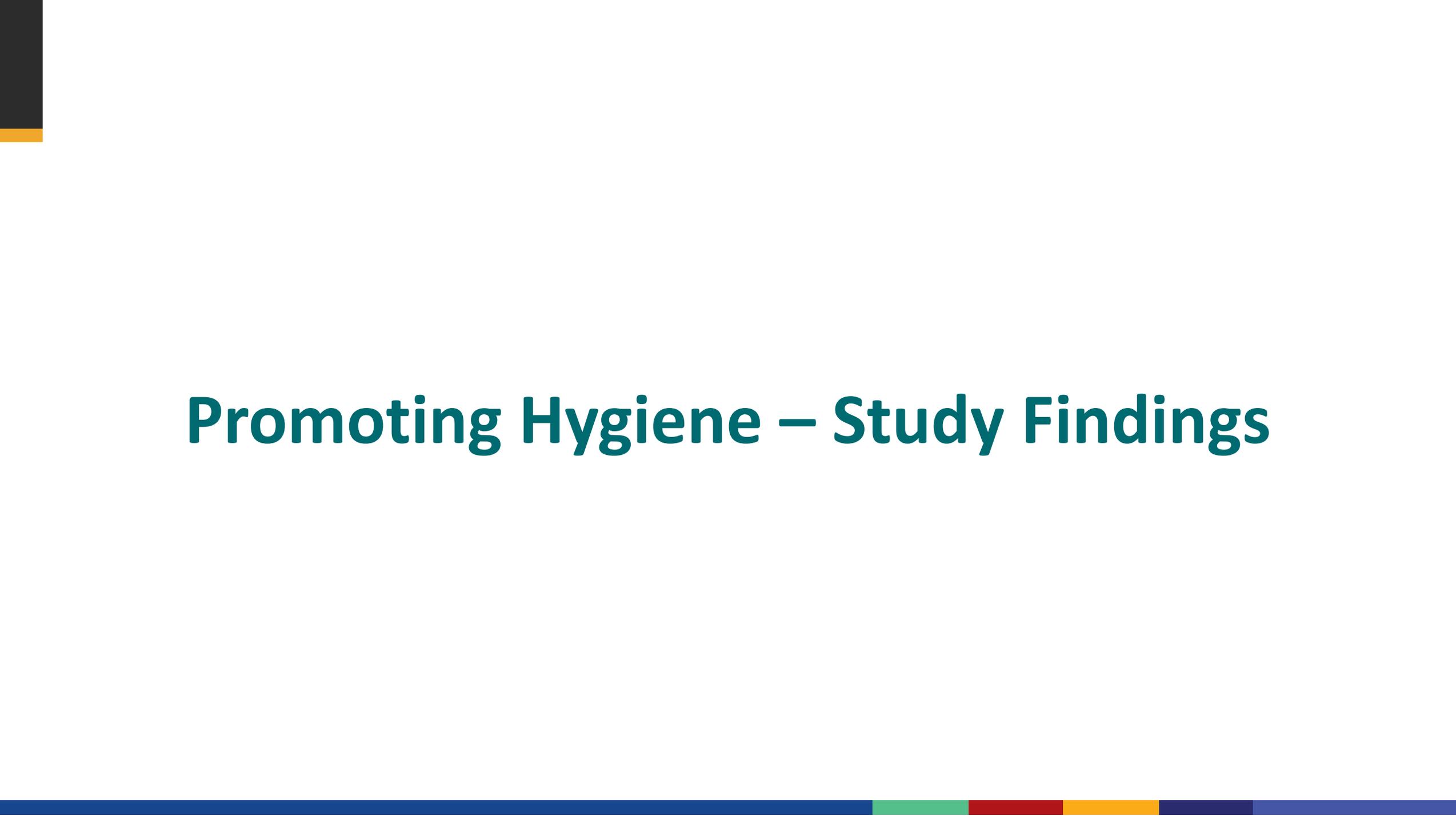
Respiratory Etiquette

- Staff oversight and involvement often needed to ensure students practice respiratory etiquette
- More guidance needed for parents, teachers, and students



Enhanced Cleaning

- Lack of time – teachers often expected to clean and disinfect their own classrooms



Promoting Hygiene – Study Findings

Addressing Study Findings

- Potential actions for **schools** and **early childhood education centers**:
 - Encouraging creative lesson plans to teach hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
 - Making sure hand hygiene supplies are located at key points
 - Using verbal and print reminders
 - Allowing for adequate time in schedule for hand hygiene
- **CDC activities** to address study findings
 - Using the findings to guide its communication, messaging, and further research on mitigation practices
 - Developing training modules and tools to help schools better integrate hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection practices into daily activities
 - Sharing findings with stakeholders to identify ways to overcome barriers

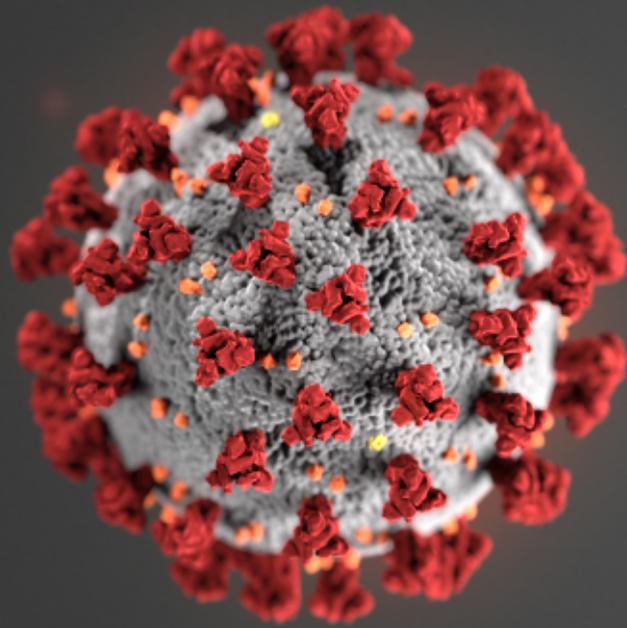
Resources



CDC Resources

- [Latest COVID-19 Information](#)
- [CDC's Handwashing Website](#)
- [Hand Hygiene at School](#)
- [Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting at Home](#)
- [EPA's List N](#)
- [Free handwashing materials](#)
- [CDC Science Brief: SARS-CoV-2 and Surface \(Fomite\) Transmission for Indoor Community Environments](#)





For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

