



## Activity 4. Glo Germ

### Handwashing Activity Overview

The purpose of the Glo Germ handwashing activity is to teach proper hand washing techniques to your volunteers and youth who work not only with animals but who may also volunteer in your 4-H food booths or participate in cook-off events.

In this activity, there are “props” that will be passed around, such as stuffed animals, a rubber ball, or like items. These items may represent animals touched at a fair or farm, shared barn equipment (water buckets, stall rakes, wheelbarrows, hog panels, etc.) These items are wiped with a “glo-germ” powder or gel, which is not easily seen with the naked eye. The use of a black light enables the powder/gel to “glow.”

Have people share the “props” by holding them and then passing them along to another person. You can keep one “germ-free” by not applying any glo-germ material on it. Use this one to show that although this item was not shedding any pathogens at the beginning, now that it’s been handled by many people who are exposed to “infected” props, it is contaminated (i.e. it glows) by the end of the activity, which is an important lesson in zoonotic disease prevention. Once the blacklight is used to show the glo germ on everyone’s hands, ask them to wash their hands as they normally would. Recheck their hands with the blacklight to determine how well they’ve washed their hands.

#### **Now have people wash their hands using proper techniques.**

What is the right way to wash your hands?

1. Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
3. Scrub all surfaces of your hands, including the palms, backs, fingers, between your fingers, and under your nails. Keep scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. Rinse your hands under clean, running water.
5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them. Do not dry on clothes, which may be contaminated by germs!

#### Extra Options for Glo Germ Handwashing Activity:

- Start off a zoonotic disease workshop with glo-germ on a greeter’s hands. Have them shake each person’s hand that enters the room. Once everyone is seated, demonstrate with the black light how germs travel unnoticeably.
- Use a cloth towel for hand wiping; you can put “glo-germ” on the towel and then have people check their hands
- As the trainer, apply powder on your hands and as youth complete the exercise shake their hands or give them a high-five to congratulate them. Then have them recheck their hands; new “germs” should appear on their hands.

- Let volunteers demonstrate how far germs can be aerosolized with the glo-germ and blacklights. Ask them to guess how far germs from a sneeze would travel, then demonstrate it with the glo germ.

#### “Real” World Applications

This activity should show how important it is to wash your hands and how fast germs spread – often times before the individual exposed even knows they exist! Below are some ideas on how to organize hand washing stations at farms and fairs to maximize efficiency.

**Tip 1:** Position hand washing stations near exit(s) so visitors can’t miss them. Have a definite transition area at exit as people leave animal space to non-animal space.

**Tip 2:** Ensure handwashing stations have running water and are accessible to children and persons with disabilities.

**Tip 3:** Have a plan in place for restocking paper towels, soap, and water.

**Tip 4:** Hand sanitizer can be offered where hand washing stations are not an option, however they should be more-so used as a supplement to soap and water rather than a replacement.

**Tip 5:** Have a plan in place for restocking hand sanitizer.