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TROPICAL STORM/HURRICANE INFORMATION SHEET

HANDWASHING CAN HELP PREVENT ILLNESS

To help prevent the spread of diseases that can cause illness, it is important to wash your hands often. Germs are spread when people forget to wash their hands or don't wash their hands thoroughly.

Basic hygiene is very important in disaster settings. Always wash your hands with soap and water. If normal, safe water sources cannot be accessed, use water that has been boiled and cooled or chemically disinfected. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used; however, since hand sanitizers alone are not as effective as proper hand washing, gloves should be worn (and then properly disposed of) for activities listed below.

When Should You Wash Your Hands?

- **After you:**
 - use the bathroom or change a diaper
 - handle uncooked food
 - play with a pet
 - clean or handle garbage
 - tend to someone who is sick or injured.
 - blow your nose, cough or sneeze
 - participate in flood cleanup activities or handle articles contaminated with flood water or sewage

- **Before you:**
 - prepare or eat food
 - treat a cut or wound
 - insert or remove contact lenses

How Should You Wash Your Hands?

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

For further information, please contact your local county health department or visit www.doh.state.fl.us or www.FloridaDisaster.org.