Wash Hands – Stop Harmful Microbes

**Key Message:** Hand washing helps keep harmful microbes from entering the body.

**Possible Questions:**
- What are some ways microbes get on the hands?
- How are harmful microbes transferred from person to person?
- How are harmful microbes transferred to the mouth and into the body?

**Content:**
Proper, frequent, thorough hand washing helps prevent harmful microbes from entering the body through the mouth.
The World Health Organization states that 50% of deaths of children from diarrhea could be prevented with proper hand washing.

Feces contain microbes that cause diarrhea and make people, especially children, **VERY SICK**. Feces must not be touched, and if it is, hands must be thoroughly washed using soap (if available). Feces is transferred in many ways such as poor bathroom habits and touching money, door knobs, baby diapers, hand rails, “shaking hands,” etc.

This poster shows ten proper hand washing steps to clean hands completely of harmful microbes. Emphasize that finger nails are just as important to keep clean as hands.

If there is not much clean water available for hand washing and the water must be used over and over, it can be boiled to kill harmful microbes.

**Participatory Activity – Creates interest and involves the learners through practice.**
Using the poster (or power point – down arrow identifies each hand washing step individually), demonstrate each hand washing step on the poster. After the demonstration, ask the participants to stand and “practice” each of the ten hand washing steps, shaking their hands to dry them.

**Check for Understanding**
- Why is hand washing very important?
- What can happen if hands are NOT washed?
- What is a major source of microbes that make people sick?
- If clean water is limited, what can be done to kill microbes if the hand washing water must be used over and over?