



# The Gingerbread Man

A story for  
Global Handwashing Day  
October 15





**The Gingerbread Man** and other traditional tales like it – where an item of food tries to escape from a growing number of pursuers – are popular in many cultures. In some versions the runaway food is a pancake or a sweet bun or a loaf of bread. But whatever the item of food, it usually gets eaten in the end! This new version of the story was written especially for Global Handwashing Day. The happy ending is not traditional but it reminds us that regular handwashing can help us all to lead healthier and happier lives.

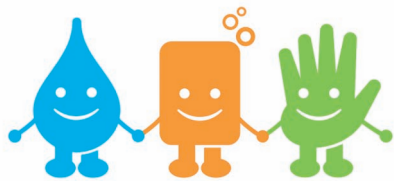
**Global Handwashing Day** aims to raise awareness of the benefits of handwashing with soap. Its founders include Unilever (Lifebuoy), the Water and Sanitation Program, UNICEF, Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Hygiene Improvement Project (HIP/USAID), and Proctor and Gamble (Safeguard).

Handwashing with soap is among the most effective and inexpensive ways to prevent diarrhoeal diseases and pneumonia, which together are responsible for the majority of the child deaths worldwide.



This storybook was commissioned by Lifebuoy to mark Global Handwashing Day, October 15

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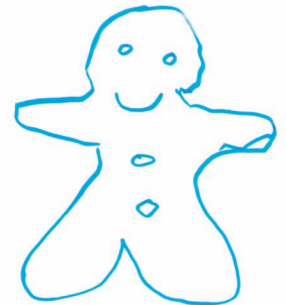
**Once upon a time** there was a little old woman who lived in a little old house on the edge of a forest. She would have been a very happy old woman but for one little thing: she had no children, and she wished for a child more than anything in the whole wide world.

One day, when the little old woman was making gingerbread, she cut a cake in the shape of a little man. She gave him two raisin eyes and two sweet cherry lips, and then she popped him in the oven to bake.

When she could smell that the gingerbread was ready, the little old woman put on her oven gloves, opened the oven door and reached down to pick up the little gingerbread man.

But just then, she sneezed!

**Aa aa aa choo!**



And the little old woman's snotty green germs sprayed out all over the freshly-baked gingerbread man! As she turned around to fetch a tissue, suddenly the gingerbread man stood up, jumped off the baking tray and ran out the kitchen door as fast as his little gingerbread legs could carry him!

"Come back! Come back!" cried the little old woman.

"No, I will not," said the Gingerbread Man.

"I've got your germs from your snotty sneeze.

But you won't get me. Just try and see.

Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the Gingerbread Man!"

The little old woman chased after the Gingerbread Man but she couldn't catch him, no matter how hard she tried.

By and by, the Gingerbread Man ran past a big hungry farmer who'd just finished milking his cows and feeding his pigs. Now he was stooped over the muddy ground planting cabbages.

**And he hadn't washed his hands with soap and water for days!**





When the big hungry farmer looked up and saw the Gingerbread Man racing past, he said, "Mmm! You'll make a tasty little snack!" And he grabbed the Gingerbread Man with his big grubby hands, dribbling and drooling all over him. But just as the big hungry farmer was about to take a big hungry bite, the Gingerbread Man wriggled free and ran away.

"Come back! Come back!" cried the big hungry farmer.

"No, I will not," said the Gingerbread Man.

"I've got germs from the little old woman's snotty sneeze.

And now you've got hers!

And I've got yours from your big grubby hands!

But you won't get me. Just try and see.

Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the Gingerbread Man!"



The big hungry farmer ran after the Gingerbread Man but he couldn't catch him, no matter hard he tried.

After some time, the Gingerbread Man ran past a whiffy old dog chewing a rotten old bone.

**He hadn't had a bath for years!**

As soon as the whiffy old dog saw the Gingerbread Man, he wagged his whiffy old tail and licked him all over with his whiffy wet tongue! But the Gingerbread Man just laughed and ran away.



“Woof! Woof!” barked the whiffy old dog. (That means ‘Stop! Stop!’ in whiffy old dog language.) “No, I will not,” said the Gingerbread Man.

“I’ve got germs from the little old woman’s snotty sneeze.  
I’ve got germs from the big hungry farmer’s big grubby hands.  
And now you’ve got theirs!



And I’ve got yours from your whiffy wet tongue!  
But you won’t get me. Just try and see.  
Run, run, as fast as you can. You can’t catch me. I’m the Gingerbread Man!”

The whiffy old dog chased after the Gingerbread Man but he couldn’t catch him, no matter how hard he tried.



In a little while, the Gingerbread Man passed a mucky little boy and a mucky little girl playing in the street. Now you need to know one thing about these mucky little children: that morning, before they went out to play, they each went to the loo and they each did a big ... POO!

**But they didn’t wash their hands with soap and water afterwards!**



And just as the Gingerbread Man ran past, the mucky little boy grabbed him in his mucky little hands and said, "Mmm! You look scrumptious! I'm going to eat you all up!" Then the mucky little girl snatched the Gingerbread Man off the mucky little boy and said, "No you're not! I am!" But just as she was about to take a slobbery big bite, the Gingerbread Man leapt out of her mucky little hands and ran away.

"Stop! Stop!" called the mucky little children.

"No, I will not," said the Gingerbread Man.

"I've got germs from the little old woman's snotty sneeze.  
I've got germs from the big hungry farmer's big grubby hands.  
I've got germs from the whiffy old dog's whiffy wet tongue.  
And now you've got theirs!  
And I've got yours from your mucky little fingers!  
But you won't get me. Just try and see.  
Run, run, as fast as you can. You can't catch me. I'm the Gingerbread Man!"

The mucky little children chased after the Gingerbread Man but they couldn't catch him, no matter how hard they tried.







By now, the Gingerbread Man was feeling extremely proud and pleased with himself. "I'm the smartest and the fastest man in the world, I am!" he said. "Nobody can catch me now!"

But when he looked up, the Gingerbread Man suddenly found his path blocked by the fast-flowing water of a deep, wide river. "Oh dear," he said, glancing back at the mucky little children and the whiffy old dog and the big hungry farmer and the little old woman all following close behind. "How am I going to get across this river before that lot catch up with me? I can't swim!"



Just then a sneaky fox appeared from behind a tree. "I can swim," he said. "I'll carry you across, if you like."

"No, you will not," said the Gingerbread Man. "I've got ..."



"Don't worry," interrupted the sneaky fox. "I don't want to catch you. I just want to help you."

"How?" asked the Gingerbread Man.

"It's easy," said the sneaky fox. "Just hop up on my tail and I'll carry you across!"





"That's a good idea," said the Gingerbread Man and up he hopped on the sneaky fox's bushy tail.

After swimming just a little way, the sneaky fox said, "You're slowing me down sitting there on my tail. Jump on my back and I'll be able to swim faster." The Gingerbread Man agreed and jumped on the sneaky fox's back. After swimming a little further, the sneaky fox said, "Now I'm worried that you'll get wet there on my back. Jump on my shoulder and you're sure to stay dry." Again, the Gingerbread Man agreed and jumped on the sneaky fox's shoulder. Half way across the river, the sneaky fox said, "I'm tired now and my shoulder is sinking under the water. Move on to my nose and you'll be safe." "Very well," said the Gingerbread Man, jumping on the sneaky fox's nose. But then, quick as a flash, the sneaky fox tossed the Gingerbread Man high into the air and gobbled him up in one greedy gulp.

But the Gingerbread Man called out from inside the sneaky fox's belly:  
"I've got germs from the little old woman's snotty sneeze.  
I've got germs from the big hungry farmer's grubby big hands.  
I've got germs from the whiffy old dog's whiffy wet tongue.  
I've got germs from the mucky little children's mucky little fingers.  
And now you've got them ALL!"

**And with all those germs inside him, the sneaky fox was very sick!**



And as soon as he opened his mouth to be sick, the Gingerbread Man jumped out! Then he turned to the sneaky fox and, with a twinkle in his raisin eyes and a beaming smile on his sweet cherry lips, he said:

“Run, run as fast as you can.  
You caught my germs but you couldn't catch me!  
I'm the Gingerbread Man!”

And then do you know what the Gingerbread Man did?

He washed himself with lots of lovely soap in the fast-flowing water of the deep, wide river! And so did the fox. And so did everybody else on the other side of the river. And they scrubbed and they scrubbed until they were all completely fresh and clean.

And they all lived ... **healthily ever after!**



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Some people say that the Gingerbread Man went back to live with the little old woman in her little old house, where they were very happy together for many years. But others say that the Gingerbread Man just ... kept on running!

What do YOU say?

Story by Kevin Graal





The pictures & handprints in this storybook were created by children and young people at Phoenix School Summer Scheme.

Phoenix is a school for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs.

Unilever supports Phoenix Primary & Secondary School, as part of its long term partnership with seven schools in the East London Borough of Tower Hamlets.





The Gingerbread Man caught germs in lots of different ways as he ran away from the little old woman. Can you think of other ways he might have caught germs and other 'germy' characters he might have met?



## What are hands for?



Hands are for writing poems and stories.

Hands are for drawing pictures.

Hands are for clapping.

Hands are for holding you up when you do handstands.

Hands are for typing on your computer.



Hands are for making sign-language.

Hands are for cooking.

Hands are for keeping count when you're adding up numbers.

Hands are for playing table tennis.

Hands are for tying your shoe-laces.



Hands are for washing yourself.

Hands are for changing your baby's nappy.

Hands are for opening windows and doors.

Hands are for playing your drum.



Hands are for turning on and off the lights.

Hands are for holding your knife and fork.

Hands are for holding your chopsticks.

Hands are for holding somebody else's hands.

By children at the Blackfriars Settlement Summer Play Scheme in London.

We use our hands in so many ways.  
That's why it's important to keep them clean.  
Can you think of other ways we use our hands?

Hands are for ...

Hands are for ...

Hands are for ...

Hands are for ...







## **WHEN** should you wash your hands?

Before preparing or eating food.

After going to the loo.

After changing nappies or washing a child who has gone to the loo.

Before and after being with someone who is sick.

Before and after treating a cut or wound.

After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

After handling an animal or animal poo.

After handling rubbish.

**Remember to use soap and water.**

But the best way to stop germs from harming you is:

**Never put your fingers in your eyes, nose or mouth!**

Why do you think this is such a good way of protecting yourself from germs?





## HOW should you wash your hands?

This might seem like a silly question. Surely everyone knows how to wash their hands! But did you know that:



**Washing your hands with soap and water** is more effective than using only water because soap dissolves the grease and dirt which might contain germs.



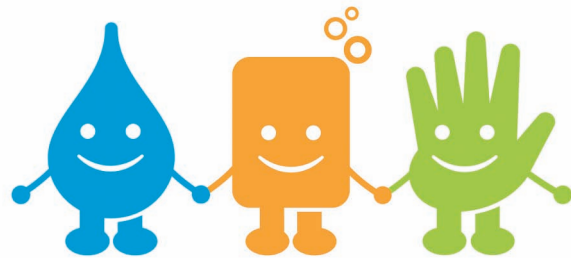
You need to wash the back of your hands and between your fingers too, if you want to get rid of ALL the germs you might be carrying on your hands. And don't forget to wash your thumbs too!



You need to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds – that's how long it takes to get rid of really stubborn germs. To help you time this properly, try singing a 20 second song while you're washing your hands. *Happy Birthday* takes about 10 seconds so you'd need to sing it twice through! Do you know a song that takes 20 seconds to sing?



In the right conditions, 1 single germ can grow into 8.5 billion in just 12 hours! Some germs that we might pick up on our hands can pass on very serious diseases. **So handwashing with soap and water really can save millions of lives around the world.**



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Story written by Kevin Graal © 2008. Pictures & handprints by children and young people at Phoenix School in London, working with artists Bryan Holdsworth & Lucy Brennan-Shiel of *artzero children's art*. Poem *What are hands for?* by children at the Blackfriars Settlement Summer Play Scheme in London. Book design by Bryan Holdsworth. Unilever supports Phoenix Primary & Secondary School as part of its long term partnership with seven schools in the East London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Unilever supports the Blackfriars Settlement in its work with local people to help them achieve their economic, educational and social potential.