



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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## **WASHING YOUR HANDS CAN HELP PROTECT FROM FLU, COLDS** *Local Event Celebrates National Observance Stressing Importance of Hand Washing*

Washing your hands may sound easy, but it's an important way to protect yourself and those around you from colds and flu. That's the message that local health officials want everyone to heed, and not just during flu season.

"Washing your hands can protect your health," said Nancy Bowen, M.D., County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHS) Public Health Officer. "This simple act, done properly and often, reduces the amounts of germs on your hands, which reduces the spread of diseases like colds and flu. And proper hand washing should be done often, all year long."

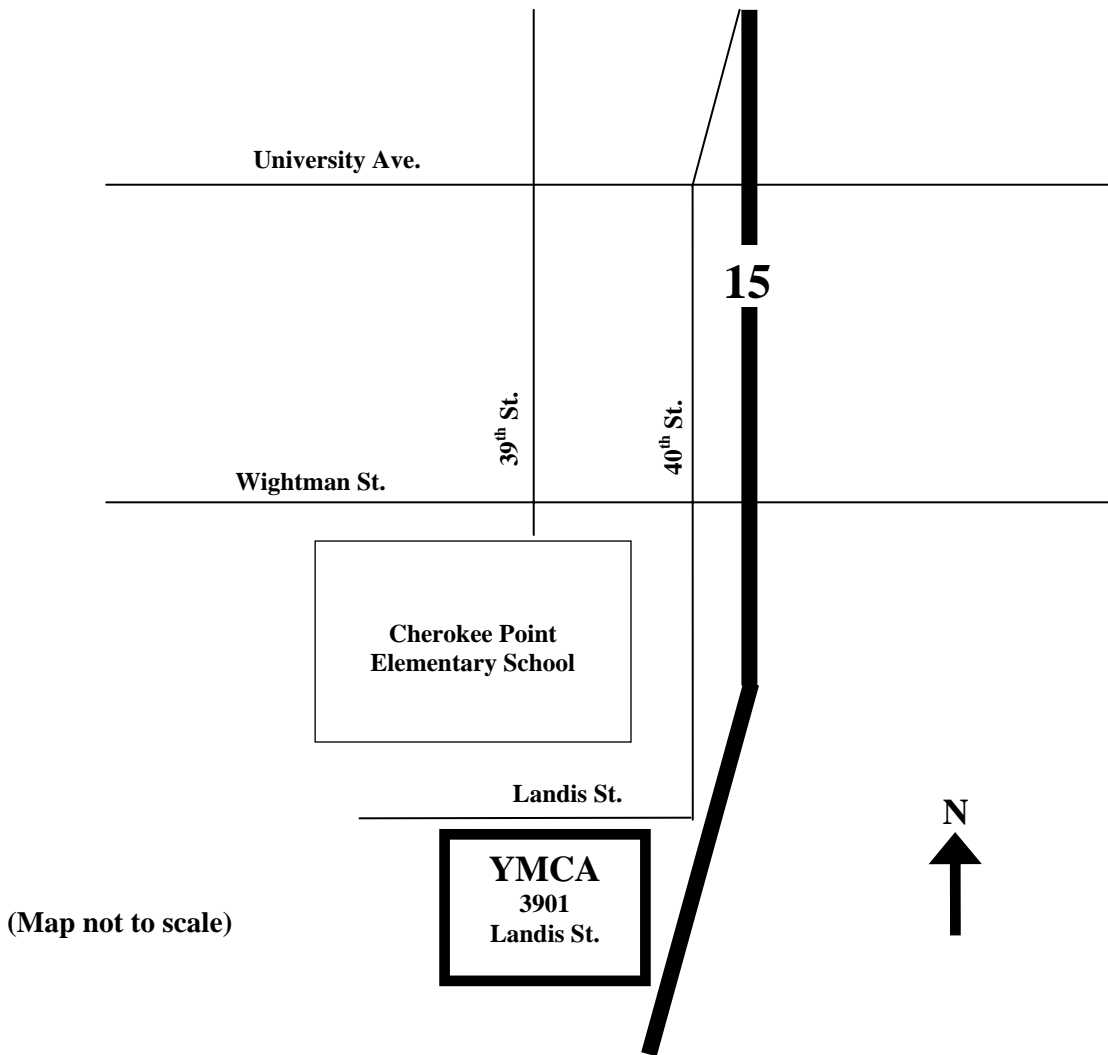
To emphasize this message, HHS and the YMCA Childcare Resource Service are sponsoring a media event on Wednesday, Dec 7, during National Hand Washing Awareness Week (Dec. 4-10, 2005).

The event, to be held at 10 a.m. at the Copley Family YMCA, 3901 Landis St. in San Diego, will feature children from the Copley Family YMCA Preschool doing a special hand washing activity, pantomiming to a hand washing song and listening to a story about a princess who has to wash her hands often. Also, Wilma Wooten, M.D., Deputy County Public Health Officer, will talk about the importance of proper hand washing in reducing the spread of disease and will be available for interviews.

Washing your hands for at least 15-20 seconds each time, and washing them often, is just one way to protect your health and those around you. Also, stay away from sick people whenever possible, cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve whenever you cough or sneeze, and stay home when you are sick. Other steps include getting regular exercise, enough rest, and a proper diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.

One of the best ways to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot. It's not too late to get one, as flu season often lasts until March or later. For recorded information about flu shots and clinic locations, please call the County Flu Information Line at 1-866-358-2966. You can also call the Aging and Independence Services/Community Health Improvement Partners Flu Hotline at 1-877-358-0202 to talk to an Information Specialist about flu shots.

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**From the North:** Take I-15 South . Take the exit toward University Ave. Take the University Ave. ramp. Stay straight to go onto 40<sup>th</sup> St. Follow 40<sup>th</sup> St. to Landis and turn right on Landis. The YMCA is on the left. Parking is available on the street and also at the parking lot ahead on the left beyond the YMCA building.

**From the South:** Take I-15 North to the University Ave. exit. Turn left onto University Ave., cross the freeway and turn left on 40<sup>th</sup> St. Follow to Landis and turn right on Landis. The YMCA is on the left. Parking is available on the street and also at the parking lot ahead on the left beyond the YMCA building.

**From the East:** Proceed west on University Ave. to 40<sup>th</sup> St., turn left on 40<sup>th</sup> St. Follow to Landis and turn right on Landis. The YMCA is on the left. Parking is available on the street and also the parking lot ahead on the left beyond the YMCA building.

**From the West:** Proceed east on University Ave. to 40<sup>th</sup> St., turn right on 40<sup>th</sup> St. Follow to Landis and turn right on Landis. The YMCA is on the left. Parking is available on the street and also the parking lot ahead on the left beyond the YMCA building.