The Story of SOAP



by Gloria Koster

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Words in **bold** appear in the glossary.

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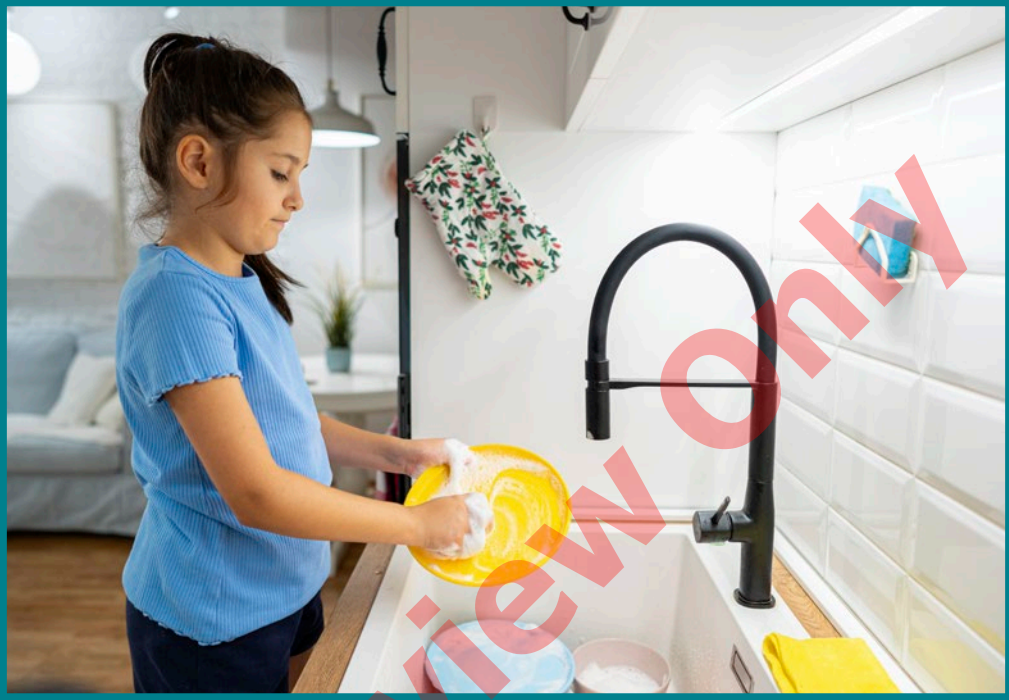
Wash Up

It's lunchtime at school. "Wash your hands with soap!" the teacher says.

At home you wash your hands after playing outside and before eating.



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After meals, you help wash dishes with dish soap. Before bed you might take a bath or shower with soap and shampoo.

Using just water isn't always enough to get things clean. Why?

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Dirt!

Dirt contains oil. Oil and water do not mix. But soap sticks to both oil and water. Soapy water can pull dirt away from things better than water by itself can.



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Germs can make you sick.

Without soap, **bacteria** and other germs can more easily spread from person to person. This can cause illness.

But soap as we know it did not exist just a couple of hundred years ago.

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Life Before Soap

How did people stay clean before they had soap? They didn't! At least, not as clean as we are today.



Long ago, people rarely took baths.

Preview Only

In ancient Japan, people soaked in hot springs. Some **Indigenous** Americans sat in sweat lodges. Ancient Greeks and Romans scrubbed with clay, sand, or oil. Then they scraped it away with a special tool.

Taking a bath was very rare for most people.



A tool used to scrape dirt away from skin

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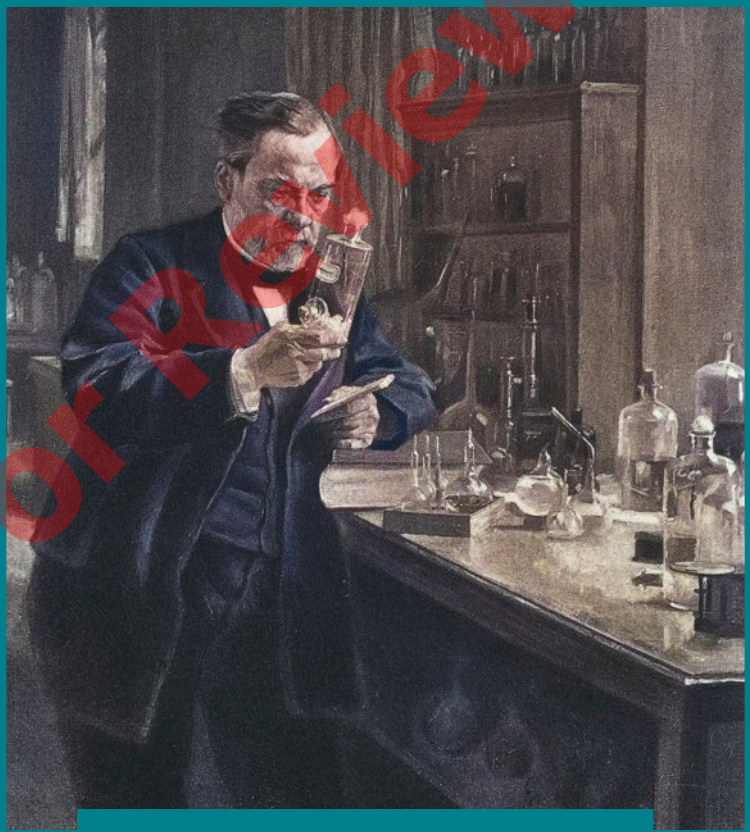
Before the 1800s, most doctors did not wash their hands before treating patients. But an English nurse named Florence Nightingale believed cleanliness was important. She made hospital staff wash their hands. This saved the lives of many people.



Florence Nightingale

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In 1861 scientist Louis Pasteur explained the connection between disease and germs. Finally, the idea of using soap to stop germs and stay healthy began to take hold.



Louis Pasteur in his lab

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Activity: The Power of Soap

What You Need:



- a glass jar with a lid
- water
- a ¼ cup measuring cup
- cooking oil
- liquid soap

What You Do:

1. Fill the jar halfway with water.
2. Add ¼ cup oil.
3. Put on the lid and shake the jar.
4. *Are the oil and water combined or separate?*
5. Now add several drops of soap.
6. Close the lid and shake again.
7. *Are the oil and water combined or separate now?*



Without soap, water cannot attach to oil. Since dirt contains oil, water cannot always wash it away. Soap and water together do the job!

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