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*Attention: All News Editors*

## **WRHA reminds that proper handwashing remains key health practice post-Melissa**

***Montego Bay, Jamaica – Wednesday, December 03, 2025*** — In the wake of the recent hurricane that disrupted communities across western Jamaica, the Western Regional Health Authority (WRHA) is reminding residents that proper handwashing, one of the simplest habits remains one of the most powerful tools in protecting public health.

With many households still experiencing water disruptions; cleanup activities, and increased exposure to contaminated surfaces, a significant increase in the risk of illnesses such as gastroenteritis, respiratory infections, and leptospirosis will occur. While the region works toward full recovery, residents can greatly reduce their chances of getting sick by making hand hygiene a consistent priority.

As the region continues rebuilding, the WRHA remains committed to supporting communities through health education, environmental assessments, and outreach. But they emphasize that individual actions should be practiced in preventing diseases.

“Consistent handwashing will be crucial in preventing disease outbreaks during this vulnerable period. Recovery is a shared effort, by taking small steps like washing our hands properly and frequently, we help protect not just ourselves, but our neighbours, our families, and our entire community,” said Dr. Marcia Johnson Campbell, Regional Priority Non-Communicable Diseases/Family Health Coordinator at Western Regional Health Authority.

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After a disaster, germs spread more easily than people realize, simple actions like washing hands before preparing food, after using the bathroom, or after cleaning can prevent infections and keep families healthy. People can still practice good hand hygiene using treated or bottled water, and by keeping hand sanitizers readily available, especially during community cleanups and relief distributions. Residents are encouraged to wash hands thoroughly, using soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds, and rinsing under clean, running water.

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