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PETALING JAYA: Unilever launched its month-long 'Global Handwashing' event at the Beaconhouse pre-school in Jalan Gasing here recently.

"This Global Handwashing Month campaign was borne out of a need for better personal hygiene practices," human resource director of Unilever Singapore and Malaysia, Nik Mustapha said.

"We hope the campaign will reach every segment of the community including children, parent, teachers and young adults at all possible places of interaction. Especially for children, we want to educate them on the proper way of washing their hands."

The practice of handwashing with soap tops the international hygiene agenda this year, with the first-ever Global Handwashing Day last Wednesday.

The campaign uses innovative tools such as 'The Glow Germ' demo to demolish 'myths' like 'Water is not enough'.

"Apart from this, articles, posters and activities like today's event at pre-schools and primary schools are used to aid education of proper handwashing and hygiene care," Mustapha added.

The Global Handwashing Day is held in collaboration with USAID, UNICEF and WHO.

"It is important to educate children on the importance of handwashing as well as teaching them the proper way of handwashing to prevent diseases such as hand, foot and mouth disease, diarrhoea, food poisoning, and influenza," Mustapha said.



MAKE IT CLEAN: Pre-school children wash their hands with soap.

"It is vital to educate children on the importance of handwashing with soap. With the recent outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease in Sarawak, it is important that teachers, parents and children practise good hygiene care. As unwashed hands carry millions of germs, these germs can be spread to the children when handling them."

Handwashing also plays an important part in the effort to reach the Millennium Development Goals related to health improvements.

Although people around the world wash their hands with water, far fewer wash their hands with soap at critical moments like after

using the toilet, after cleaning a child, and before handling food.

"They do not realise that handwashing is a life-saving habit that can prevent unwanted diseased or worse, death of millions of children."

Lifebuoy is one of Unilever's oldest brands, and has been sold in countries across the world since the 1890s. Throughout its history Lifebuoy soap has been affordable to everyone, helping people to live with greater freedom from health problems.

Today, more than 1.6 billion people around the world trust Lifebuoy products to protect them from germs and diseases.

Here are a few simple steps to mastering the handwashing technique:

- Pump some soap onto your palm. Make sure the soap at the palm of your hand is at least the size of a 50 sen.
- Start scrubbing your hands in a circular motion for 10 seconds until it is foamy or bubbly.
- Start scrubbing in between each of your fingers. This is an area of your hand, which is considered to be the germs' 'hot spots'. This area of your hands tends to be damp and cramped in which is a germs' perfect hideout.
- After you have finished scrubbing in between each of your fingers on both hands it is time for your fingernails. Scratch the palm of your hands with your nails to scrub each nail.
- Don't forget the back of your hands and the wrist. Use the soap to scrub these areas.
- Rinse your hands with clean water.
- Dry your hands with a clean tissue or cloth.