



Hand Hygiene Policy

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Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure

Purpose

Effective hand hygiene reduces the incidence of healthcare-associated infections.

Procedure

Indications for Handwashing and Handrubbing

A. Indications for Handwashing

1. When hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with pertinacious material or are visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids, wash hands with soap and water.
2. Before eating and after using a restroom, wash hands with a soap and water.
3. Handwashing may also be used for routinely decontaminating hands in the following clinical situations:

- Before having direct contact with patients
- After contact with a patient's intact skin (e.g., when taking a pulse or blood pressure, and lifting a patient)
- After contact with body fluids or excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, etc, even if hands are not visibly soiled
- When moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient care
- After contact with inanimate objects (including medical equipment) in the immediate vicinity of the patient
- After removing gloves

B. Indications for Handrubbing

If hands are ***not visibly soiled***, an alcohol-based hand rub may be used for routinely decontaminating hands in the following clinical situations:

- Before having direct contact with patients
- After contact with a patient's intact skin (e.g., when taking a pulse or blood pressure, and lifting a patient)
- After contact with inanimate objects (including medical equipment) in the immediate vicinity of the patient

Non-Surgical Hand Hygiene Technique

A. Handwashing with soap and water

1. Wet hands with running water
2. Apply hand washing agent to hand
3. Vigorously rub hands together for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers
4. Rinse hands thoroughly with water and with hands angled down in the sink

5. Dry hands thoroughly with a disposable towel(s)
6. Use disposable towel to turn off the water

B. Alcohol-based hand rub

1. Apply product to palm of one hand
2. Rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers
3. Continue to rub until hands are dry

Nails

1. Artificial fingernails or extenders may not be worn if duties include direct contact with patients or food preparation.
2. No nail varnish to be worn if duties include direct contact with patients or food preparation.
3. Natural nail tips shall be less than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long in care and catering departments.

Gloves and Hand Hygiene

Gloves reduce hand contamination by 70 – 80 percent, prevent cross-contamination and protect patients and health care personnel from infection. However, the use of gloves does not eliminate the need for hand hygiene.

1. Wear gloves when contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials (other body fluids, secretions and excretions), mucous membranes, non-intact skin and contaminated items will or could occur.
2. Change gloves during patient care if moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site.
3. Remove gloves promptly after use, before touching non-contaminated items and environmental surfaces, and before caring for another patient.
4. Decontaminate hands after removing gloves.