

Hand Hygiene

What is hand hygiene?

Hand hygiene is removing germs from your hands. It can be done in two ways: washing with soap and running water or using an Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR).

Hand hygiene is the responsibility of all individuals involved in health care. The focus is on germs that have been picked up from environment on our hands.

Hand hygiene must be done:

- Before preparing, handling, serving or eating food.
- Immediately after caring for self or a patient (e.g. after blowing nose, toileting, or doing wound care).
- Before putting on & after taking off gloves.
- When hands accidentally come into contact with secretions, excretions, blood & body fluids (hands must be washed with soap & running water).
- After contact with items in the patient's environment.



HAND HYGIENE

Information for Patients and Family Members



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Hand Hygiene Hand Washing and ABHR

Hand Washing

Hand washing with soap and running water must be performed when hands are visibly soiled.

Most germs on the hands are removed during the action of rubbing while washing, rinsing and drying hands.

Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR)

ABHR is better than washing hands with soap and water when hands are not visibly soiled.

ABHR rapidly kills most germs and contains ingredients to reduce skin irritation.

ABHR is less time-consuming than washing with soap and water.

Hand Hygiene Hand Washing with Soap and Water



- Remove hand & arm jewelry as it is hard to clean and hides germs from washing action.
- Wet hands with warm (not hot) water. Hot water is hard on the skin, & will lead to dryness.
- Apply soap & lather all surfaces of hands for a minimum of 15 seconds.
- Pay attention to finger tips, between fingers, backs of hands and base of the thumbs. These are the most commonly missed areas.
- Using a rubbing motion, rinse soap from hands. Residual soap can lead to dryness & cracking of skin.
- Dry hands thoroughly with a paper towel. Rubbing vigorously with paper towels can damage the skin.
- Turn off taps with paper towel, to avoid recontamination of your hands.

Hand Hygiene Using ABHR

Using Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR)



- Remove hand & arm jewelry as it hides germs from the antiseptic action of the alcohol.
- Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, follow hand washing steps).
- Apply 2 full pumps or more of ABHR for a loonie-sized amount onto one palm.
- Spread product over all surfaces of hands, concentrating on finger tips, between fingers, back of hands & base of thumbs. These are the most commonly missed areas.
- Rub hands until product is dry. This will take a minimum of 15 seconds if sufficient product is used.

***For more information contact
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