



HOMES AND SENIORS SERVICES

POLICY & PROCEDURE NUMBER: 2.3

DEPARTMENT: *Infection Control*

SUBJECT: *Hand Hygiene*

APPROVAL DATE: April 2004

REVISION DATE: April 2007; March 2016

REVIEW DATE: March 2017; November 2018

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PURPOSE:

To reduce the spread of infections and maintain skin integrity.

Hand hygiene is the single most important control strategy against the spread of infectious disease.

There are 2 methods for performing hand hygiene – hand washing with soap and water; and hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- **The use of gloves does not replace the need to clean hands**
- Discard gloves after each procedure and clean your hands
- Wear gloves only when indicated, otherwise they become a major risk for transmission of organisms
- Keep fingernails short and clean
- A plain ring/band is preferable as diamond or stone settings collect microorganisms and may injure residents
- Do not wear artificial nails
- Avoid nail polish – chipped nail polish increases bacteria growth and decreases the ability to visually detect dirt under the nails
- Make sure that sleeves are pushed up and do not get wet
- Clean hands for a minimum of 15 seconds
- Dry hands thoroughly
- Apply lotion to hands frequently to maintain skin integrity
- Ensure hand hygiene product is accessible at the point of care. Point of care refers to the place where three elements occur together: the resident, the staff, care involving contact is taking place
- Residents may require help cleaning their hands before they begin and after ending an activity.

When should hand hygiene be performed?

- Before and after work/tasks
- Before and after physical contact with residents



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- Before and after personal body functions
 - Before preparing, handling, serving or eating food
 - Before feeding residents
 - Before putting on and after taking off gloves
 - Whenever a staff is in doubt about the necessity for doing so

JUST CLEAN YOUR HANDS

The 4 moments of hand hygiene, part of the “Just Clean Your Hands” program:

1. Before initial resident/resident environment contact. Clean your hands when entering; before touching resident or before touching any object or furniture in the resident’s environment. Some examples may be: shaking hands, stroking an arm, helping a resident to move around/get washing, taking pulse/blood pressure/chest auscultation.
2. Before aseptic procedures. Clean your hands immediately before any aseptic procedure (e.g. oral/dental care, eye drops, catheter insertion and changing a dressing).
3. After body fluid exposure risk. Clean your hands immediately after an exposure risk to body fluids (and after glove removal). Some examples may be: oral/dental care, eye drops, skin/wound care, injection, cleaning up urine/feces/vomit, handling waste (bandages, napkin, incontinence pads), cleaning of contaminated and visibly soiled material or areas (bathroom, medical instruments).
4. After resident/resident environment contact. Clean your hands when leaving after touching resident; or after touching any object or furniture in the resident’s environment. Some examples may be: shaking hands, helping resident move around, changing linen, monitoring alarm, holding a bed rail, clearing the bedside table.

HANDWASHING PROCEDURE:

1. Handwashing with soap and running water must be done when hands are visibly soiled. If running water is not available, use moistened towelettes to remove the visible soil, followed by alcohol based hand rub.
2. Hand hygiene with soap and water, done correctly, removes organisms.
3. Turn tap on with warm water and thoroughly wet hands.



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4. Apply soap from a dispenser. Work up lather with active scrubbing. Scrub backs and fronts of hands, fingertips, base of thumbs, between fingers and wrists. A count of 15 seconds should be used as a time factor.
5. Rinse hands thoroughly under warm running water, holding hands down and elbows up.
6. Dry hands well with disposable paper towel, wipe from fingertips to wrist.
7. Turn tap off with paper towel to avoid re-contamination of hands.
8. Discard paper towel in garbage.
9. Use hand lotion frequently to prevent dry, cracked skin.

ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB

PROCEDURE:

1. Alcohol-based hand rub is the preferred method for cleaning hands. It is better than washing hands (even with antibacterial soap) when hands are not visibly soiled.
2. Hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub, correctly applied, kills organisms in seconds.
3. Alcohol-based hand rub will be available for staff, residents and visitors at points of care. Alcohol-based rinse products can only be used when there is no visible contamination of hands.
4. Apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers for 15 seconds. Note that the amount of product needed to reduce the number of bacteria on the hands varies by product.
5. Rub lightly over hands (approximately 15 seconds) until the product has evaporated and hands are dry. Alcohol is a flammable, and care should be taken to ensure the product is completely evaporated before coming in close contact to flame/spark (i.e. smoking).
6. Do not rinse.

References: Public Health Ontario website – www.oahpp.ca