

Hand hygiene: A guide to clean hands

Cleaning your hands (also called hand hygiene) is one of the best ways you can stop germs from spreading. The main way germs spread is by our hands. You can pick up germs almost everywhere, including phones, doorknobs, and railings. You can spread these germs through a hospital, clinic, or other healthcare facility/homes such as person care, group & residential homes without even knowing it.

Your hands may look clean, but they can still have germs that cause infections. When you forget to clean your hands or don't clean them well, you can spread germs to other people. You can also spread germs to yourself if your hands aren't clean and when you touch your eyes, mouth, nose, or a cut on your body.

It's important to encourage family members and visitors to clean their hands too whenever they visit or help you with your resident's care.

Hand hygiene is the single most important step in preventing infections. Perform hand hygiene by using alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or with soap and water.



Wash your hands with
soap and running water
when **hands are visibly
dirty**



If your **hands are not
visibly dirty,**
frequently clean them
by using alcohol-based
hand rub or soap and
water

Perform hand hygiene

- Before initial contact with resident environment
- Before performing any clean procedures, such as a dressing change, changing a catheter bag, putting in eye drops
- After body fluid exposure
- After contact with resident environment

As well, clean your hands:

- Before you prepare and eat food
- Before you touch your eyes, nose & mouth
- After you use the washroom, blow your nose, or cough or sneeze into your hands

Do you know: Keeping fingernails natural, clean, healthy & short will help to reduce the spread of germs

Clean Hands Save Lives

Sanitize Your Hands

In healthcare settings, including group, residential and personal care homes, alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) is the preferred method of hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled. ABHR kills the germs on your hands and is fast and effective.

- Dispense enough hand rub into the palm of your hand to cover all surfaces of your hands.
- Allow approximately 20-30 seconds for the entire procedure (with at least 15 seconds of rubbing).



Note: if your hands dry within 15 seconds, it means you did not place enough product on your hands to kill germs properly. You need enough product on your hands to cover all surfaces and to rub for a minimum of 15 seconds before drying occurs.

Wash Your Hands:

- When hands are visibly soiled. Use plain liquid soap and water. If done properly, the handwashing process should take approximately 40-60 seconds (this includes time for turning on the tap and drying hands). This also includes a minimum of 15 seconds of friction and lathering of soap.
- After body fluid exposure.
- With certain organisms such as *C.difficile* or when a resident has diarrhea.

It is also best to use soap and water:

- When your hands look or feel dirty
- Before you eat or prepare food
- After going to the bathroom



It is important to know that plain soap does not kill germs. It is the process of friction and lathering that loosens the germ from your hands and then rinsed down the drain!

Use the “4 Moments for Hand Hygiene” when caring for your residents

Resident room: This is in the resident’s area. In a single room this is everything in the resident’s room. In a multiple room, this is everything in the immediate proximity to the resident. In the resident’s room, staff, volunteers and family members are to clean hands following “Your 4 Moments for Hand Hygiene”

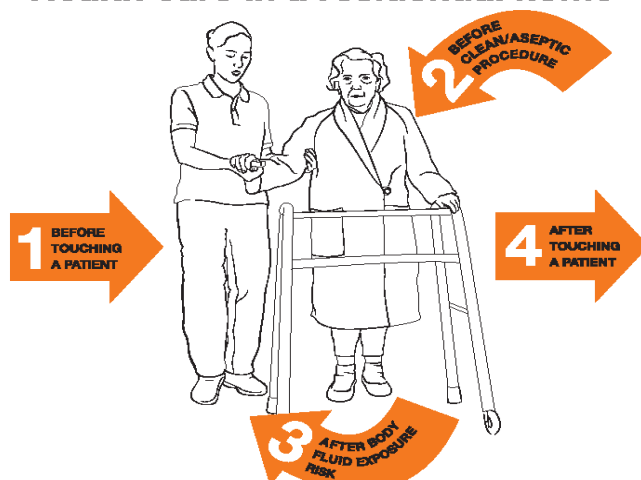
Shared activities: In common areas where residents gather, the environment is shared by many people. To reduce spread of organisms, everyone is to clean hands before beginning and after ending the activity. Some residents may need help cleaning their hands before they begin and after they end an activity. If staff, volunteers or families provide any “direct care” where shared activities occur, the 4 Moments for Hand Hygiene are to be followed.

Direct Care is defined as providing hands-on care such as: bathing, washing, or turning a resident; changing clothes or providing continence care; changing dressings and caring for open wounds/lesions; and toileting.

*If direct care is provided in shared activities, the “4 Moments for Hand Hygiene” are to be followed.

Your Moments for Hand Hygiene

Health care in a residential home



1	BEFORE TOUCHING A PATIENT	WHEN?	Clean your hands before touching a patient.
2	BEFORE CLEAN/ASEPTIC PROCEDURE	WHEN?	To protect the patient against harmful germs carried on your hands. Clean your hands immediately before performing a clean/aseptic procedure.
3	AFTER BODY FLUID EXPOSURE RISK	WHEN?	To protect the patient against harmful germs, including the patient's own, from entering his/her body. Clean your hands immediately after a procedure involving exposure risk to body fluids (and after glove removal). To protect yourself and the environment from harmful patient germs.
4	AFTER TOUCHING A PATIENT	WHEN?	Clean your hands after touching the patient at the end of the encounter or when the encounter is interrupted. To protect yourself and the environment from harmful patient germs.



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