



MANUAL: Infection Prevention and Control

NUMBER: IV-04

CATEGORY: Hand hygiene

TITLE: **Hand Hygiene**

PAGE: 1 of 1

ISSUED BY: Infection Control Committee

REFERENCE: MOHLTC Infection Control Core
Competencies: Hand Hygiene; 2007.
MOHLTC/OHA Just Clean Your Hands 2008

DATE OF ISSUE: January 2008
REVIEWED/REVISED: May 2008

Policy:

To remove or kill most of the transient bacteria present on the hands of healthcare personnel acquired through contact with patients, staff, contaminated equipment and the environment, hand hygiene **must** be performed by all GBHS employees, physicians, students and volunteers where deemed appropriate. It is expected that hand hygiene behavior will be taught and supported by staff with all patients and their visitors while receiving care at GBHS. Effective hand hygiene is the single most important practice in preventing transmission of microorganisms.

All Grey Bruce Health Services staff will complete the MOHLTC Infection Control Core Competency module Hand Hygiene during general orientation or as part of annual in service training.

Alcohol based hand rubs are the preferred method for decontaminating hands that are not visibly soiled. The alcohol concentration provides a rapid kill for most transient organisms and is less time consuming as compared to soap and water. Alcohol based products also contain skin emollients to reduce skin irritation.

Hand hygiene must be performed with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled. It is the mechanical action of washing, rinsing and drying that removes most of the transient bacteria present on hands.

Antibacterial soap can be used in the ICU settings or before invasive procedures; such as central line insertions. It has a residual action where microorganisms are killed for a period of time after hand washing. It is not recommended for routine hand washing.

Bar soap in healthcare settings is not acceptable except for personal use by individual patients.

Artificial fingernails are **unacceptable** and must not to be worn by any healthcare personnel providing direct patient care. Direct evidence has linked artificial fingernails and outbreaks of infection. The margins of artificial nails and chipped nail polish harbor bacteria that cannot be removed effectively with normal hand hygiene.



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Jewelry is not permitted for healthcare personnel providing direct patient care with the exception of plain bands (Refer to Human Resources; Personal Appearance policy 1X-60). Jewelry can hinder effective hand hygiene and a great number of organisms can be found on and around jewelry. All personnel who will scrub for sterile procedures, such as performing surgery or any type of invasive procedure such as central line insertion, must **remove** jewelry prior to scrubbing.

Hand care is an important aspect of effective hand hygiene. Frequent hand hygiene can lead to dry and cracked hands, making proper hand washing technique essential. Frequent use of hand-care lotions provided by GBHS is encouraged. Protective gloves should be used as part of Routine Practices when indicated, but for as short a time as possible to reduce hand irritation. Hands must be clean and dry prior to donning gloves. Should skin irritation or breakdown occur, staff should have their hands assessed by the Occupational Health and Safety Department.

Procedure

Technique for performing hand hygiene with an alcohol- based rub:

- Rub all parts of the hands with the alcohol-based rub
- Pay special attention to fingertips, between fingers, backs of hands and base of thumbs
- Clean hands for at least 15 seconds
- Allow hands to completely air dry
- Apply hospital- approved hand lotion to hands frequently
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Technique for performing hand hygiene with soap and water:

- Turn on tap and adjust water temperature
- Wet hands thoroughly while leaving the water running
- Apply one pump of liquid soap
- Vigorously lather hands. Use friction to scrub all surfaces of hands and wrists, including between fingers, around nail beds and base of thumbs. Clean hands for at least 15 seconds.
- Rinse hands thoroughly leaving the water running.



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- Dry hands thoroughly by gently patting with paper towel. Use same paper towel to turn off tap and then discard.

Your 4 Moments for Hand Hygiene

1. Before initial patient/patient environment contact	<p>When? Clean your hands when entering, before touching patient or before touching any object or furniture in the patient's environment.</p> <p>Why? To protect the patient/patient environment from harmful germs carried on your hands.</p>
2. Before aseptic procedures	<p>When? Clean your hands immediately before any aseptic procedure.</p> <p>Why? To protect the patient from harmful germs, including the patient's own germs, entering his or her body.</p>
3. After body fluid exposure risk	<p>When? Clean your hands immediately after an exposure risk to body fluids (and after glove removal).</p> <p>Why? To protect yourself and the health care environment from harmful patient germs.</p>
4. After patient/patient environment contact	<p>When? Clean your hands when leaving: after touching patient or after touching any object or furniture in the patient's environment.</p> <p>Why? To protect yourself and the health care environment from harmful patient germs.</p>