

## Handwashing Procedure

### PURPOSE

- To prevent cross-contamination and spread of infectious organisms
- To maintain cleanliness of hands

### EQUIPMENT

1. Paper towels
2. Lotion
3. Liquid soap
4. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer or wipes,
5. Antiseptic hand scrub (optional), and an impermeable plastic trash bag (see Infection Control)

### PROCEDURE

1. Take alcohol-based hand sanitizer from bag,
2. Pour small amount of sanitizer into palm and spread over hands and fingers and rub thoroughly until dry.
3. If caring for a patient with a drug-resistant bacteria, i.e. C-Diff, utilize microbial soap and water after contact with patient & surfaces.
  - a. Take equipment to wash the hands (liquid soap, paper towels, lotion) to the sink area in bathroom.
  - b. Use one paper towel on which to place the other items. The second and third towels are used for washing and drying the hands before and after care has been given.
  - c. Wet hands and forearms. Then lather, using vigorous friction, starting at the fingertips, and working toward the forearm for no less than 15 seconds.
  - d. Do not touch the sink.
  - e. Rinse under a stream of water for at least 10 seconds. Avoid using cloth towels or bars of soap because these are a haven for bacteria.
  - f. Dry hands from the fingers toward the forearm.
  - g. Turn off water faucet with a dry paper towel; then discard the towel in a trash bag.
  - h. Clean up any spills around the sink area with paper towel before discarding.
4. Clean and replace equipment.
5. Discard disposable items according to Standard Precautions.

### DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES:

Document Standard Precautions on the visit report.

**Standard Precautions** are the minimum infection prevention practices that apply to all patient care, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status of the patient, in any setting where healthcare is delivered. These practices are designed to both protect HCP and prevent HCP from spreading infections among patients. Standard Precautions include: 1) hand hygiene, 2) use of personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns,

masks), 3) safe injection practices, 4) safe handling of potentially contaminated equipment or surfaces in the patient environment, and 5) respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette.

## WHY ARE ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUBS SO GREAT?

Alcohol-based hand rubs (foam or gel) kill more effectively and more quickly than hand washing with soap and water.

- They are less damaging to skin than soap and water, resulting in less dryness and irritation.
- They require less time than hand washing with soap and water.
- Bottles/dispensers can be placed at the point of care so they are more accessible.

## HOW DO I PRACTICE HAND HYGIENE CORRECTLY?

### **HAND RUB** (foam and gel)

1. Apply to palm of one hand (the amount used depends on specific hand rub product).
2. Rub hands together, covering all surfaces, focusing in particular on the fingertips and fingernails, until dry. Use enough rub to require at least 15 seconds to dry.

- **HANDWASHING**

1. Wet hands with water.
2. Apply soap.
3. Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces, focusing on fingertips and fingernails.
4. Rinse under running water and dry with disposable towel.
5. Use the towel to turn off the faucet.
- 6.

## HAND HYGIENE TECHNIQUES

One key element to protecting yourself and protecting others is proper hand hygiene. Even if your hands appear clean, the process of removing and handling soiled

equipment could result in unseen hand contamination. Hand hygiene can be performed with an alcohol-based hand rub or by hand washing. If a hand rub is used, dispense the product onto the palm of one hand and rub hands together covering all surfaces until hands are dry. If your hands are visibly contaminated, they must be washed using soap and water. The first step is to wet your hands and apply a small amount of liquid soap into your palm. Rub vigorously until lather appears and continue for at least 15 seconds. Be sure to scrub between your fingers, under your fingernails, and the back of your hands as well as the palm up to your wrists. Then, rinse your hands under running water. Dry your hands with a disposable towel. Using the towel as a barrier, turn off the faucet.

## WHEN SHOULD I USE GLOVES?

You should use gloves when hands may become contaminated with blood, body fluids, excretions, or secretions **or** when touching mucous membranes or non-intact skin, **or** contaminated surfaces or objects.

Common problems with glove use are failure to:

- Wear gloves when touching open wounds or mucous membranes, such as the mouth and respiratory tract.
- Wear gloves when touching items that are likely to be contaminated, such as urinary catheters and endotracheal tubes.
- Change gloves between patients.
  - Remove gloves after patient-care.

## HOW DO I USE GLOVES CORRECTLY?

Put on new gloves before contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes

- Wear gloves during contact with bodily fluids or contaminated items
- Remove gloves after caring for a patient - do not wear the same gloves for more than one patient
- Do not reuse or wash gloves
- Don't forget hand hygiene after removing gloves. ***Gloves are not a replacement for hand hygiene***
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## WHAT ABOUT HAND LOTIONS?

Hand lotions are important to prevent skin dryness and irritation. You should use only hospital-approved hand lotions. Other lotions may:

- make hand hygiene less effective
- cause breakdown of latex gloves
- become contaminated with bacteria if dispensers are refilled