

Hand Hygiene

Information for Patients, Families and Caregivers



You can substantially reduce your risk of illness by the simple act of washing your hands often.

Why should I wash my hands?

Keeping hands clean is the best defense in preventing the spread of infection and disease. Hands may look clean but invisible micro organisms (germs) are always present - some harmful, some not.

When healthcare workers wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, they are helping to stop the spread of infection and disease. Patients, visitors and caregivers can do their part as well to prevent germs from spreading by using proper hand washing techniques.

When should I wash my hands?

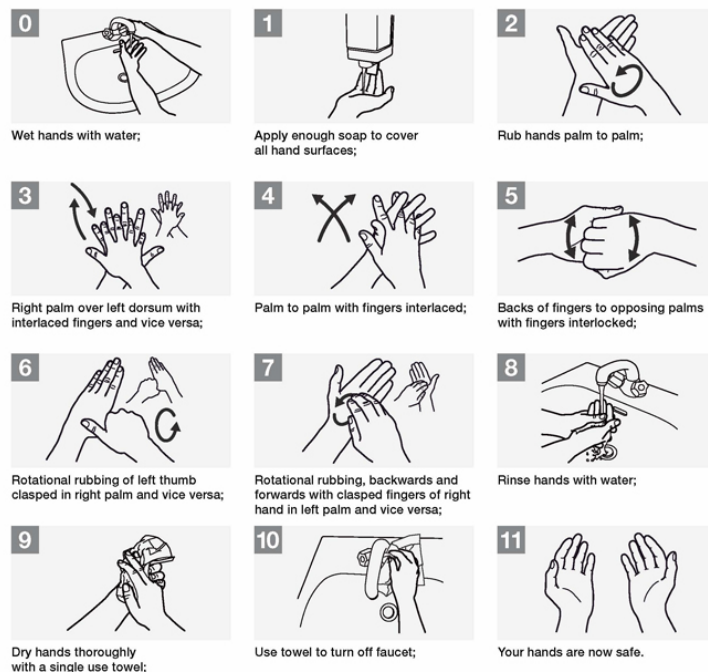
- On entering and leaving the hospital and hospital unit
- After visiting the toilet
- Before eating or handling food
- When hands are visibly soiled
- After coughing or sneezing into the hands

How should I wash my hands?

It is important that hand hygiene is carried out correctly to prevent the spread of infection. Washing hands with soap and water will remove the majority of germs.

Hands should be wet thoroughly with water before applying soap. All surfaces of both hands - front and back, between the fingers, fingernails, and wrists - should be vigorously massaged with soap.

Make sure you rinse all the soap off your hands under running water, dry your hands thoroughly, then turn off the tap with a paper towel and discard the towel in the garbage.



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When should I use Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer?

In some instances, soap and water for hand washing may not be available, so the use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is recommended.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is commonly located at the entrance of hospitals, other health care facilities, and individual wards.

Hand sanitizer should be vigorously massaged into all surfaces of the hands and wrists, paying attention to the thumbs, fingertips, between the fingers and backs of hands until your hands feel dry. Sufficient hand rub must be applied in order to treat all hand and wrist surfaces.

When should I not use Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizer?

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer may not be as effective against some infections that cause diarrhea (e.g. Norovirus, Clostridium difficile) so please follow your health care provider's advice.

If you see that people are not washing their hands, politely ask them to do so.



*Stopping the spread of infection
Is everybody's business.*

*Always wash
your hands well
with soap and
water,
particularly
after going to
the toilet and
before eating
food.*