

# Cleansing Agents

## ALCOHOL BASED HAND RUB (ABHR)

### Technique

- Soap and water hand wash must be performed if hands look or feel dirty
- Apply an application to fill cupped palm of one hand
- Rub into all surfaces of hands (finger tips and nails, wrists, palms, backs of hands and between fingers)
- There must be sufficient wetness on all skin surfaces that it takes 15 or more seconds to dry
- Rub hands together until rub has evaporated prior to gloving or touching the patient

**Reference:** Best Practices for Hand Hygiene, MOH (2012)

<http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/library/publications/year/2012/best-practice-guidelines-handhygiene.pdf>

## SOAP AND WATER

### Technique:

- Wet your hands up to the wrists ensuring all surfaces of the hands are covered by water
- Apply the cleanser/soap
- Smooth it evenly all over your hands, including the thumbs and in between fingers, lather well rubbing vigorously. Place fingertips and nails into the lathered palm and rub. Repeat with opposite hand
- Rinse off every trace of lather under running water, to prevent skin irritation
- Dry thoroughly, taking special care between the fingers. More than one paper towel may be necessary

## IN HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE



- When performing hand hygiene in a client's home, staff will use their own hand hygiene supplies, as they may not have the same access to needed equipment and supplies as in a health care facility. Therefore:
- ABHR used for routine hand hygiene
- In the absence of running/clean water, if hands visibly soiled with dirt, blood or other body fluids wipe hands first with an individual-use towelette followed by ABHR
- Wash hands with soap and water at earliest opportunity.

# Cleansing Agents (continued)

## HAND HYGIENE: CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE

In cases of suspected or confirmed *C. Difficile*, perform hand hygiene with the first available method: ABHR or soap and water. If hands are visibly soiled, soap and water is the preferred method. ABHR at the point of care is required.

## HAND HYGIENE: NOROVIRUS

The current recommendation is that the healthcare provider performs hand hygiene at the point of care using an ABHR immediately after patient care. Hand washing is recommended after this.