

# Infection Prevention and Control

## Hand Hygiene



## Patient Information Leaflet

## **Why is hand hygiene necessary?**

Hand hygiene can protect you from picking up micro-organisms (germs) on your hands which may cause you harm. Hands may look clean, but micro-organisms which are too small to see, are always present, some harmful, some not. The best way to remove them is by washing your hands.

## **When to keep your hands clean**

It is important to clean your hands:

- Before meals;
- After visiting the toilet or commode;
- After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose;
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

## **Using hygienic hand rub**

Use the hygienic hand rub when entering and exiting the ward and encourage your visitors to do the same. You may have a hand gel dispenser at the foot of your bed which you and your visitors can use.

## **Detergent hand wipes**

In some cases getting to a hand wash basin may not be easy. This is often the case when you find it hard to move around the ward or if you are bed bound. A detergent hand wipe will be given to you to use before your meals. Please don't be shy in asking for one if you are missed. Staff will be happy to help.

## **Advice on general hand care**

- Dry hands well with paper towels to prevent chapping; remember wet hands will pick up more germs from objects than dry hands.
- Cuts and abrasions should be covered with a waterproof dressing.
- Protect your skin by using hand cream. This will prevent dryness and soreness.
- Keep finger nails short and clean.

## **Concerned a member of staff has not cleaned their hands?**

It's ok to remind them. Sometimes staff can forget and they **will not feel offended** if you remind them. Sometimes they may have cleaned their hands out of your sight, so asking them will reassure you they have cleaned their hands.

Staff should be cleaning their hands:

- Before taking blood samples.
- Before touching wounds, drips, catheters or other tubes.
- Before handling food.
- Performing hygiene care.

- Before and after an examination.
- After helping someone use the toilet or bathroom facilities.
- Before putting on gloves and after removing them.

## Washing your hands with soap and water

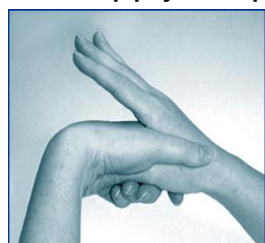
The following six steps describe the best way to effectively clean your hands and should take just 10-15 seconds.



Wet hands first then apply soap.



Rub vigorously over all parts of the hands and wrist as shown.



Remember to open the bin using the foot pedal only, to avoid contaminating your clean hands.

This is effective against bacteria and viruses. If you have diarrhoea and/or vomiting always use soap and water to clean your hands.

**Should you have any further questions or require further advice please speak to your doctor, nurse or Infection Prevention staff.**

**Infection Prevention Team 01535 294848**

**Write any questions/queries below**

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If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on: 01535 294019 for advice.

Please raise any issue you may have about your care and treatment with a member of staff. Raising your concerns will not adversely affect the care you will receive.

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