

VOLUNTEER SERVICES**HAND HYGIENE**

Hand hygiene is the single most important procedure for preventing health care associated infections.

Guidelines:**Hand hygiene should be performed**

- Before and after direct contact with a patient (including contact with intact skin and activities such as taking vital signs or moving a patient)
- After contact with inanimate objects in the immediate vicinity of the patient (e.g. bedrails, over-bed table, chair, medical equipment)
- After removing gloves (gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene)
- When moving from a dirty activity to a clean one
- Before inserting or manipulating any invasive device
- Before donning sterile gloves
- Before eating and after using a restroom
- Anytime hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood or body fluids

Effective hand hygiene can be accomplished in either of two ways:

- Through use of soap and water
- Through use of a waterless, alcohol-based hand rub

Both methods are effective and safe for patients and for health care workers.

Choice of hand hygiene agents

Use an alcohol-based hand rub for routine hand hygiene when hands are not visibly dirty or visibly contaminated with blood or body fluids.

Soap and water should always be used

- When hands are visibly soiled
- After and alcohol-based hand rub has been used consecutively a number of times and you are noticing build up of the emollients.

When soap and water is used, it is necessary to use antiseptic soap;

- Before doing a sterile or invasive procedure
- Between patient contacts in high-risk areas, including
 - Intensive care units
 - Nurseries
 - Immunosuppressed patients

HAND HYGIENE CON'T

Techniques for hand hygiene

Alcohol-based hand rub

Apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers. Continue to rub until hands are dry. Follow manufacturer's recommendations regarding the volume of product to use.

Soap and water

Wet hands first with water, apply amount of product recommended by manufacturer, and rub hands together for 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers. Rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel. Use towel to turn off the faucet.

Artificial Fingernails

Health care workers who provide direct patient care may not wear artificial fingernails, nail extenders or other nail enhancements. Natural nails should be kept short (extending no more than a 1/4 inch past the finger tip). Nail polish may be worn but should be replaced when it becomes chipped.