

7. Hand Hygiene

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ANNUAL REVIEW:

REVIEWED	<u>Sanford N. Bailey, M.D.</u>	<u>July-15-2025</u>
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SUPERSEDES: Procedure titled

Purpose

To provide guidelines for effective hand hygiene, in order to prevent the transmission of bacteria, germs and infections.

Abbreviation

PCMX - Para-chloro-meta-xlenol

CDC – Center for Disease Control and Prevention

ABHR- Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

ICU – Intensive Care Unit

OR – Operation Room

DEFINITIONS:

- Alcohol-Based Hand Rub: An alcohol-containing preparation designed for application to the hands for reducing the number of viable microorganisms on the hands.
- Antimicrobial Soap: Soap containing an antiseptic agent.
- Antiseptic Agent: Antimicrobial substances that are applied to the skin to reduce the number of microbial flora. Examples include alcohols, chlorhexidine, PCMX, quaternary ammonium compounds and triclosan.
- Plain Soap: Detergents that do not contain antimicrobial agents.
- Waterless Antiseptic Agent: An antiseptic agent that does not require water. After applying such an agent, the hands are rubbed together until the agent has dried.

POLICY

- All staff shall use the hand-hygiene techniques, as set forth in the following procedure. The CDC has recommended guidelines on when to use non-antimicrobial soap and water, an antimicrobial soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
(See MMWR 2002; 51 - NO. RR-16,
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5116.pdf>)
 - Before coming on duty
 - When hands are soiled
 - Before each patient encounter
 - Before applying sterile gloves and inserting a central intravascular catheter
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- After coming in contact with patient's intact skin, i.e., taking a patient's blood pressure, pulse, lifting/moving the patient
- After working on a contaminated body site and then moving to a clean body site on the same patient
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids and hands are not visibly soiled
- After contact with medical equipment/supplies in patient areas
- Always after removing gloves or facemasks
- After toileting
- After smoking
- After blowing or wiping the nose
- Before and after eating
- Before manipulation of contact lenses
- Soap and water must be used when hands are visibly soiled.
- If hands are not visibly soiled, hands may be disinfected with either an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water. In these situations, the CDC encourages the use of ABHRs.
- Performance improvement activities shall be conducted to monitor compliance with hand hygiene guidelines. Processes shall be improved as needed.

PROCEDURE

- Using antimicrobial soap and water or non-antimicrobial soap and water:
 - Keep clothing away from sink and splashes.
 - Wear minimal jewelry.
 - Keep nails short (1/4 inch in length). No artificial nails or extenders in high-risk areas, i.e., OR, ICU.
 - Turn on water and adjust temperature for your comfort.

- Wet hands and apply manufacturer's recommended amount of soap to hands. Lather well (soap reduces surface tension enabling the removal of bacteria).
- Clean fingernail area (bacteria may be harbored beneath fingernails).
- Wash hands thoroughly, using rigorous scrubbing action for at least 15 seconds. Work lather around fingernails, top of hands, etc. (to facilitate eradication of all bacteria).
- Rinse hands and wrists under running water.
- Repeat hand-hygiene technique, if necessary (to prevent recontamination of hands).
- Dry hands with clean paper towel.
- Turn off faucets with used paper towel and discard.
- Avoid using hot water for hand-hygiene. Repeated use of hot water may increase the healthcare worker's risk of dermatitis.
- Using an alcohol-based hand rub:
 - Apply the manufacturer's recommended amount of alcohol-based hand rub to palm of one (1) hand.
 - Rub hands together, covering all areas of the hands and fingers, until hands are dry, per manufacturer's recommendations.

NOTES

- Always follow Standard Precautions.
- Post CDC's Hand Hygiene flyers in conspicuous locations throughout the organization to remind patients and staff to perform proper hand hygiene.
- Gloves are to be worn when contact with blood, bodily fluids, mucous membranes, dressings, non-intact skin, etc., is anticipated.

- Change gloves and discard after each patient contact. One (1) pair of gloves - one (1) patient.
- Change gloves when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site on the same patient.

REFERENCES:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings, *Guidelines*, page last updated May 19, 2011, <http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/Guidelines.html>, last accessed October 2015
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Flyer: *Clean Hands Saves Lives*, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/pdf/handwashing.pdf>