



Hand Hygiene

Infection Prevention



Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use

Germs are everywhere! They can get onto hands and items we touch during daily activities and make you sick. Cleaning hands at key times with soap and water or hand sanitizer is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to those around you.

There are important differences between washing hands with soap and water and cleaning them with hand sanitizer. For example, alcohol-based hand sanitizers DON'T kill all types of germs, such as a stomach bug called norovirus, some parasites, and *Clostridium difficile*, which causes severe diarrhea. Hand sanitizers also may not remove harmful chemicals, such as pesticides and heavy metals like lead. Handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs, pesticides, and metals on hands. Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Dirty gloves can soil your hands; always clean hands after removing gloves. Knowing when to clean your hands and which method to use will give you the best chance of preventing sickness.



Hand Hygiene

When and How

Soap and Water



WHEN

- When hands are visibly soiled
- After caring for a person with known or suspected infectious diarrhea
- After known or suspected exposure to spores e.g. B. anthracis, C difficile outbreak

HOW

- Wet hands with water.
- Apply soap.
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces, focusing on fingertips and fingernails.
- Rinse under running water and dry with disposable towel.
- Use the towel to turn off the faucet.

Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer



WHEN

- Immediately before touching a patient
- Before applying gloves to preform an aseptic task (e.g., placing an indwelling device) or handling invasive medical devices
- Before moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same patient
- After touching a patient or the patient's immediate environment
- Immediately after glove removal
- After contact with blood, body fluids or contaminated surfaces

HOW

- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Apply. Put enough product on hands to cover all surfaces.
- Rub hands together, until hands feel dry. This should take around 20 seconds.
- Note: Do not rinse or wipe off the hand sanitizer before it's dry; it may not work as well against germs.

Hand Lotions Or Creams



Use hand lotions or creams in order to minimize the occurrence of irritant contact dermatitis associated with handwashing. Soaps or detergents can damage skin when applied on a regular basis. Hand lotions and creams often contain humectants, various fats and oils that can increase skin hydration, replacing altered or depleted skin lipids that contribute to the barrier function of normal skin. Several controlled trials have demonstrated that regular use (e.g., twice a day) of such products can help prevent and treat irritant contact dermatitis caused by hand-hygiene products.