

Infection Prevention Campaign

Did You Know Hand Washing is the Most Important Way of Reducing the Spread of Infections and Saving Lives ?

Thank Your Colleagues for Reminding You to Wash Your Hands

A simple way you can make a difference in your patient's life is by reminding your colleagues, patients, or visitors to wash their hands and saying "THANK YOU" if during your hectic day they remind you to wash your hands or to re-wash them in their presence. Every day health care workers move in many directions, answer to many people, perform hundreds of tasks, and save lives. Washing your hands and reminding others to wash their hands will make the difference in your patient's outcome.

Health-care associated infections are a major cause of complications and death among hospitalized patients. Such infections affect nearly 2 million patients a year in the United States and are responsible for approximately 80,000 deaths each year.¹As health care workers you can make a difference in your patient's outcomes by simply washing your hands with either soap and water or alcohol-based hand hygiene products and following the hand hygiene guidelines (outlined on the back).

Cleaning hands with either soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers is one of the most important steps health care workers, patients, and visitors can take to avoid spreading infections. Strict hand hygiene compliance protects you, your patients, and your family members from germs and developing an infection, cold, the flu, or other contagious illnesses.



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Jarvis WR. Selected aspects of the socioeconomic impact of nosocomial infections: Morbidity, mortality, cost, and prevention. *Infect Control Hosp Epidemiol.* 1996 Aug;17(8):552-557.

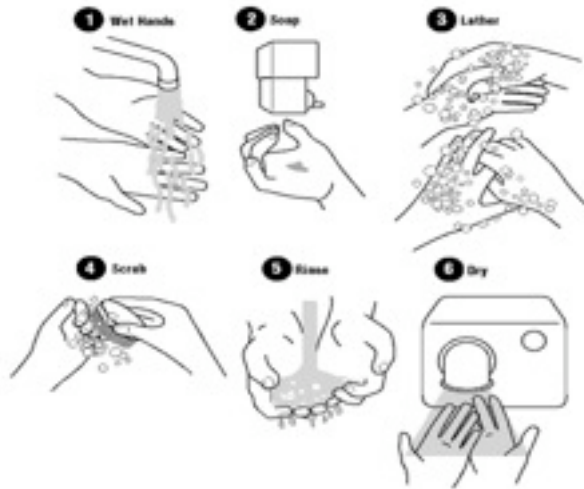


For more information please visit: www.labormanagementproject.org

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Hand Hygiene Guidelines

When to use soap and water:



1. When hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with blood, urine, or other fluids

2. Before eating & feeding the patients

3. After using the restroom

4. After caring for patients colonized with *Clostridium difficile* (alcohol-based hand hygiene products are not effective at eliminating *Clostridium difficile*)

When to use alcohol-based hand products or soap and water:

- If hands are not visibly soiled, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer **or** soap and water for routinely decontaminating hands before and after you touch a patient or when leaving a patient's room



- A single act of hand “washing” (with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water) after one patient and before the next patient suffices to decontaminate your hands if you are not recontaminating your hands

- In-between patients (as in talking on the telephone, handling objects, etc.).

- A good rule of thumb is that if you apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as you leave one patient and are still rubbing your hands together as you arrive at the next patient then there is no need to repeat hand antisepsis.

Gloves are **NOT** a replacement for hand washing!

Gloves can be an important adjunct to, but not a replacement for, proper hand hygiene practice.

If you are wearing gloves, clean your hands before applying gloves & after removing gloves.

