

HAND HYGIENE

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PURPOSE

To ensure patient/client care staff practice proper hand hygiene techniques and nail care to aid in the prevention and spread of infection per CDC guidelines.

DEFINITIONS

- I. Alcohol-Based Hand Rub - An alcohol-containing preparation designed for application to the hands for reducing the number of viable microorganisms on the hands. In the United States, such preparations usually contain 60%–95% ethanol or isopropanol.
- II. Antimicrobial Soap - Soap (i.e., detergent) containing an antiseptic agent.
- III. Antiseptic Agent - Antimicrobial substances that are applied to the skin to reduce the number of microbial flora. Examples include alcohols, chlorhexidine, chlorine, hexachlorophene, iodine, chloroxylenol (PCMX), quaternary ammonium compounds, and triclosan.
- IV. Antiseptic Handwash - Washing hands with water and soap or other detergents containing an antiseptic agent.
- V. Antiseptic Hand Rub - Applying an antiseptic hand-rub product to all surfaces of the hands to reduce the number of microorganisms present.
- VI. Decontaminate Hands - To Reduce bacterial counts on hands by performing antiseptic hand rub or antiseptic handwash.
- VII. Hand Antisepsis - Refers to either antiseptic handwash or antiseptic hand rub.
- VIII. Hand Hygiene - A general term that applies to either handwashing, antiseptic handwash, antiseptic hand rub, or surgical hand antisepsis.
- IX. Handwashing - Washing hands with plain (i.e., non-antimicrobial) soap and water.
- X. Visibly Soiled Hands - Hands showing visible dirt or visibly contaminated with proteinaceous material, blood, or other body fluids (e.g., fecal material or urine).

POLICY

- I. All Agency staff providing patient/client care will observe proper hand hygiene techniques.
- A. When hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with proteinaceous material or are visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids, staff will wash hands with either a non-antimicrobial soap and water or an antimicrobial soap and water
 - B. Before eating and after using a restroom, staff will wash hands with a non-antimicrobial soap and water or with an antimicrobial soap and water
 - C. Staff will wash hands with non-antimicrobial soap and water or with antimicrobial soap and water after known or suspected exposure to clostridium difficile, after known or suspected exposure to patients with infectious diarrhea during norovirus outbreaks, or if exposure to *Bacillus anthracis* is suspected or proven.
 - D. If hands are not visibly soiled, staff may use an alcohol-based hand rub for routinely decontaminating hands in all other clinical situations described below. Alternatively, staff may wash hands with an antimicrobial soap and water in all clinical situations described below:
 - 1. Decontaminate hands prior to initial entry into the supply bag;
 - 2. Decontaminate hands before having direct contact with patients/clients;
 - 3. Decontaminate hands before and after performing any invasive procedure such as inserting indwelling urinary catheters, peripheral vascular catheters, or other invasive devices that do not require a surgical procedure, or before or after wound care;
 - 4. Decontaminate hands after contact with a patient's/client's intact skin (e.g., when taking a pulse or blood pressure, and lifting a patient), even when gloves are worn;

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5. Decontaminate hands after contact with body fluids or excretions, mucous membranes, nonintact skin, and wound dressings if hands are not visibly soiled;
 6. Decontaminate hands if moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient/client care;
 7. Decontaminate hands after contact with inanimate objects (including medical equipment) in the immediate vicinity of the patient/client;
 8. Decontaminate hands after removing gloves;
 9. Decontaminate hands before handling medication or food.
- II. All Agency staff providing patient/client care will keep fingernails short in length to prevent injury to the patient/client and/or to prevent broken nails and torn cuticles that could provide portals of entry for infection.
- III. All Agency staff providing patient/client care will remove any personal jewelry that may harbor microbes or cause injury to the patient/client.

PROCEDURE

- I. Hand Hygiene With Antimicrobial Soap and Water or Non-Antimicrobial Soap and Water
 - A. Wet hands and wrists with water.
 - B. Apply an amount of product recommended by the manufacturer to hands, and rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers.
 - C. Rinse thoroughly with water.
 - D. With hands held upright, dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.

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- E. Avoid using hot water, because repeated exposure to hot water may increase the risk of dermatitis.
- II. Hand Hygiene with an Alcohol-based Hand Rub
- A. Apply product to palm of one hand
 - B. Rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry
 - C. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations regarding the volume of product to use.
- III. Education
- A. All staff providing patient/client care will be responsible for instructing the patient/client and their caregiver in proper hand washing techniques and documenting instructions, response, and compliance.