

IPC Topic: Hand Hygiene

Intro: Hand hygiene includes washing hands with soap and water to remove germs or using alcohol-based hand rub to kill germs also known as microorganisms. Practicing hand hygiene is the number one defense to reduce the risk of germs spreading from multiple reservoirs that your hands come in contact with every day, including skin, the respiratory system, and the healthcare environment, including surfaces, equipment and devices.

What is the risk? Germs can spread through touch. Proper hand hygiene can reduce the spread of germs and help protect yourself and your patients.

Highlights:

- Recognize when to do hand hygiene:
 - **Before** initial patient or patient environment contact
 - **Before** aseptic or clean procedure
 - **After** body fluid exposure risk
 - **After** patient or patient environment contact
 - **After** removal of gloves
- Hand Sanitizer- is recommended in most clinical situations.
 - Cover your palms and back of hands.
 - Cover between your fingers.
 - Cover your thumb and fingertips/nails.
 - Use 60% > alcohol-based hand sanitizer provided by facility.
 - Rub hands together until hands feel dry.
- Steps for hand washing
 - Create a good lather and rub palms together for a complete cleaning for at least 15 seconds.
 - Cover tops of hands, between fingers, thumbs and fingertips.
 - Rinse and dry.
- Tips to reduce the spread of germs:
 - NO artificial nails, gel nails, extenders, or embellishments.
 - Natural fingernails should not be more than ¼ in long.
 - No chipped nail polish.
 - Hand and wrist jewelry is not recommended.
 - Use supplied lotions that are compatible with hand hygiene products and gloves supplied by facility.
 - Don't touch contaminated surfaces after performing hand hygiene.
 - Avoid touching your face/eyes with your hands.

Summary: By understanding the importance of good hand hygiene in stopping the spread of germs, you can take action to stop them. Timely and correctly performed hand hygiene may be the most important thing you do today to fight infections and keep YOU and others healthy!

Resources on hand hygiene and recognizing risk:

1. [Clean Hands Count Campaign | Hand Hygiene | CDC](#)
2. [Print Materials and Job Aids from Project Firstline | Infection Control | CDC](#)
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/videos/EP21-Hands-LowRes.mp4>
4. [Microsoft PowerPoint - hand hygiene core.ppt \(cdc.gov\)](#)
5. [Healthcare Providers | Hand Hygiene | CDC](#)