

# Hand Hygiene Policy

Now for some information that will help you comply with the Guidelines.

The purpose of hand hygiene is to reduce the risk of transmission of infection to patients and employees.

**Hand hygiene is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of organisms and potential infection.**

## Hand Hygiene with soap and water

is indicated when hands are visibly soiled or suspected to be contaminated.

1. Wet hands with water using temperature that is comfortable.
2. Apply appropriate soap, and wash hands and wrists vigorously for 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers. Bar soap is NOT to be used.
3. Rinse hands under running water, allowing water to drip from fingertips.
4. Thoroughly dry hands and wrists with paper towel.
5. Turn faucet off using a dry paper towel to touch the handle, protecting your clean hands from the contaminated handle.

◆◆**Soap and water are required for adequately removing contamination from hands after caring for patients with disease conditions transmitted by spores (i.e. Clostridium difficile, Anthrax)**◆◆

**Hand Hygiene with Waterless Sanitizer is the preferred method of disinfecting hands provided they are not visibly soiled or suspected to be contaminated.** Waterless sanitizers are conveniently located throughout the facility. Apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry. Follow the manufacturer's recommendation on the volume of product to use.

**EXCEPTION:** Diseases transmitted by spores (i.e. Clostridium difficile, Anthrax).

**Hand Lotion will be provided in key locations on units for employee use to combat skin dryness and irritation.**

1. Lotions selected for healthcare personnel should not contain petroleum or other oil emollients that may affect the integrity of gloves or the antimicrobial effect of the hand washing agent.
2. Employees will not use over the counter products in the workplace.

## Finger Nails

Outbreaks of infections have been linked to healthcare workers with long and/or artificial nails.

1. Employees who provide direct patient care will not wear artificial nails or nail enhancements.
2. Natural nails must be kept short (1/4 inch) and well groomed.
3. Hands, including the area around nails, should be free of inflammation.
4. Nail polish may be worn provided that it is in good repair.

## Indication For Hand Hygiene

1. Before and after each patient contact.
2. Before and after touching wounds/non-intact skin, whether surgical, traumatic, or associated with an invasive device.
3. Before preparing medication or diagnostic agents.
4. Before performing a procedure involving contact with a body orifice.
5. Between patient care procedures involving different body sites of the same patient (i.e., from urinary to respiratory system).
6. After contact with a source of microorganisms (body fluids and substances, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, an inanimate objects that are likely to be contaminated).
7. Before inserting indwelling urinary devices or other invasive devices that do not require a surgical procedure.
8. Before donning sterile gloves.
9. After removing gloves. (Gloves are an adjunct to, not a substitute for handwashing).
10. After performing personal hygiene activities (i.e., toileting, sneezing, coughing, and combing hair).
11. Before eating, drinking or handling food.

**Indication for Handwashing with soap and water - When the hands are visibly soiled.**

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Artificial nails** – Substances or devices applied to the natural nail to augment or enhance the wear's own nail. This includes, but is not limited to acrylic nails, gel nails, bonding, tips, wrappings, and tapes.

**Direct Patient Care Providers** – Any staff member performing any task that involves directly touching the patient or their environment.

**Good Repair** – Free from peeling, chips, or cracks.

**Short nails** – Nails no longer than ¼ inch past the tip of the finger.

**Suspected contamination** – Hands may be contaminated after contact with a source of microorganisms (such as body fluid and other potential infectious material).