

HAND HYGIENE TECHNIQUE

Follow these simple steps given by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to clean your hands.



1. Palm to palm



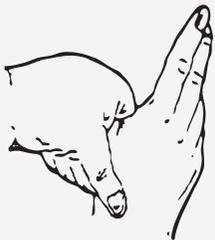
2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa

How ELSE CAN I, A VISITOR, HELP REDUCE HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS?

For infection prevention & control purposes, and to keep patients safe and well, visitors are requested:

- **Not to** visit when you are unwell e.g. have a cold, flu, cold sores, diarrhoea and/or vomiting.
- **Not to** eat or drink in the ward. Canteen facilities are provided for this purpose.
- **Not to** use a patient's cup or glass.
- **Not to** use the patient toilets.
- **Not to** sit on a patient's bed. Use the chairs provided.
- **Not to** touch any medical devices, drips or catheters.

Always follow staff instructions on hand hygiene as, in some illnesses, soap and water is better at removing bacterial germs such as *Clostridium difficile*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like more information about infection prevention and control in the hospital or have concerns, please talk to a member of ward staff or the Ward Manager

Additional information is available from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre at www.hpsc.ie

Hand Hygiene



Information for patients, relatives and visitors



WHAT IS HAND HYGIENE?

Hand Hygiene is the general term that refers to the action of hand cleansing. Hands are the main pathways of germ transmission and the most important way to avoid spreading harmful germs and prevent healthcare associated infections is hand hygiene.

WHY IS HAND HYGIENE IMPORTANT?

Germs are often harmless but they can also cause illnesses such as colds, tummy bugs as well as a more serious illness like flu, MRSA and Clostridium difficile. You pick up germs routinely on your hands when you touch the environment such as door handles, telephones and after using the toilet and coughing or sneezing into your hands.

Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infections.

WHEN SHOULD I CARRY OUT HAND HYGIENE?

Patients

You should carry out hand hygiene when hands are visibly dirty and

- Before eating or handling food.
- Before touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Before and after touching dressings or medical devices such as drips (Intravenous Catheter) and/or urinary catheters
- After using the toilet, bedpan or commode, and
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

Visitors

You should carry out hand hygiene on entering the hospital and

- Before and after visiting your relative or friend.
- Before carrying out tasks, such as helping a relative with their meal or helping them to the toilet, and
- On entering and leaving an isolation area.

Staff

Staff should carry out hand hygiene

- Before touching you.
- Before they perform a clean/aseptic procedure, such as inserting an IV (Intravenous Catheter).
- After tasks which might lead to exposure to body fluids, such as emptying your urinary catheter.
- After touching you, and
- After touching things in your care area, such as bed rails or your medical chart.

Please remind staff to clean their hands if you think they have forgotten to do so.



How Do I CARRY OUT HAND HYGIENE ?

There are a number of ways to keep your hands clean and free from germs including bacteria and viruses.

Wash your hands with dispensed liquid soap and warm running water

- When your hands look dirty or stained.
- Remove your jewellery. Wet your hands and apply soap from the dispenser. Rub all parts of the hand and wrist vigorously (see step by step technique pictures overleaf).
- Rinse well under running water and dry with paper towels.

Use alcohol-based hand rub or gel:

- When your hands look clean and if soap and water is not available.
- Clean looking hands may still carry a lot of germs.
- Alcohol is very effective at killing germs.
- Rub your hands together vigorously using the same technique in the pictures overleaf until your hands are dry.