

Purpose:

To make sure that all residents, staff and visitors are protected from infections which are spread by touch.

Hand-washing is the most important thing that we can do to stop infection from spreading

Policy:

Places to wash hand must be easy to see and easy to use.

Management must make sure that everyone knows how to wash their hands properly. For example, display posters showing how to wash hands properly.

Hands must be washed before and after touching a resident.

You must always wash your hands:

- If they get dirty in any way.
- Before you start work..
- Before and after meal/tea breaks.
- Before touching anything to do with food.
- Before and after you work with any resident.
- Whenever you touch any body substance.
- Whenever you touch anything that is not clean.
- Before you touch any medical equipment.
- After treating a resident.
- Before you leave or come back to the resident care area.
- After you take off gloves.
- After you go to the toilet or touch anything to do with the toilet.
- After smoking.

Clinical (Surgical) Hand-washing is to be carried out

- Before you do anything that goes under the skin. (e.g. wound dressings; inserting urinary catheter etc.)
- When caring for residents who have altered immunity (Immuno-compromised).
- When caring for residents who have an infection.

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Procedure:

Routine Hand-washing

You have to rub your hands hard with soap to remove dirt and micro-organisms.

Solution : Liquid soap (neutral PH soap with no added substances which cause irritation and dryness should be used)

Time : at least 10 - 15 seconds

Area : Hands only

1. Turn on taps and make sure the water is warm
2. Put your hands under running water
3. Make sure that the soap bubbles cover all of your hand and rub them together hard for at least 10 seconds..
4. Wash all the soap off under running water.
5. Pat the hands dry with a disposable towel.(Patting rather than rubbing reduces the chance of chapping).

Clinical (Surgical Hand-washing)

Use a special anti-microbial solutions to make sure that there are no micro-organisms of any kind on your hands.

Solution : Liquid soap or 2% Chlorhexidine.

Time : 30 - 60 seconds (check instructions from manufacturer)

Area : Hands, wrists, forearms

1. Turn on taps and make sure the water is warm.
2. Wet your hands and arms up to the elbow under running water.
3. Press the pump once with your elbow so that the washing solution is in your hand.
4. Make sure that all your skin is washed by the soap by doing these things.
 - Rub the palms round and round against each other.
 - Rub the back of each hand with the front of the other.
 - Rub the palms against each other with the fingers between each other.
 - Rub the back of each hand with the front of the other with the fingers between each other.

- Rub each thumb round and round while holding it in the other hand.
 - Rub the fingers or each hand round and round while holding them in the other hand.
5. Rub each wrist with the other hand for thirty seconds.
 - For Clinical (Surgical) hand-washing use an extra squirt of washing liquid and rub the arm right up to the elbows for at least one more minute.
 - The first time you wash your hands in a day do it for two minutes. If you wash again on the same day then one minute of washing is okay.
 6. Wash off all the soap under the running water.
 7. Turn off taps with your elbow or a paper hand towel.
 8. For surgical hand-washing: hold your hand up in the air and dry them from fingers to elbow.
 9. "Pat" dry with paper towel.

Special note:

Only turn the taps off with your hands or a paper towel

Do not touch waste paper bins with your hands.

Make sure you wash for the recommended time.

Wash all over your hands. People often forget to wash their wrists; under wedding rings; under finger nails; between the fingers, at the side of the hands and their thumbs.

Do not use nail brushes - they are hard to keep clean.

If your hands don't look dirty and there are no hand washing facilities then you can use Alcoholic chlorhexidine preparations.

Staff should not use a residents hand basin unless there are no others available.

Do not leave towels near basins for everyone to use.

Right handed people tend to wash their left hand best and left handed people tend to wash their right hand best. Wash both hands exactly the same

Also refer to Policy B16 – Wound Care (Standard 1.6) Policy A5 – Aseptic Technique (Standard 4.7)
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