

Policy Name:	HAND HYGIENE	
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PURPOSE:

To provide guidelines for effective hand hygiene, in order to prevent the transmission of bacteria, germs and infections.

DEFINITIONS:

- Alcohol-Based Hand Rub: An alcohol-containing preparation designed for application to the hands for reducing the number of viable microorganisms on the hands.
- Antimicrobial Soap: Soap containing an antiseptic agent.
- Antiseptic Agent: Antimicrobial substances that are applied to the skin to reduce the number of microbial flora. Examples include alcohols, chlorhexidine, PCMX, quaternary ammonium compounds and triclosan.
- Plain Soap: Detergents that do not contain antimicrobial agents.
- Waterless Antiseptic Agent: An antiseptic agent that does not require water. After applying such an agent, the hands are rubbed together until the agent has dried.

POLICY:

- All personnel will use the hand-hygiene techniques, as set forth in the following procedure. The **CDC** has recommended guidelines on when to use non-antimicrobial soap and water, an antimicrobial soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Before coming on duty
 - When hands are soiled
 - Before each patient encounter
 - Before applying sterile gloves
 - Before applying gloves and inserting peripheral intravenous catheters
 - After coming in contact with patient's intact skin, i.e., taking a patient's blood pressure, pulse, lifting/moving the patient
 - After working on a contaminated body site and then moving to a clean body site on the same patient
 - After coming in contact with bodily fluids, dressings, mucous membranes, etc., and hands are not visibly soiled
 - After contact with medical equipment/supplies in patient areas
 - Always after removing gloves

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- After toileting
- After smoking
- After blowing or wiping the nose
- Before and after eating
- Soap and water must be used when hands are visibly soiled.
- If hands are not visibly soiled, hands may be disinfected with either an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water. In these situations the CDC encourages the use of ABHRs.

PROCEDURE:

- Using antimicrobial soap and water or non-antimicrobial soap and water:
 - Keep clothing away from sink and splashes.
 - Wear minimal jewelry.
 - Keep nails short (1/4 inch in length). No artificial nails.
 - Turn on water and adjust temperature for your comfort.
 - Wet hands and apply manufacturer's recommended amount of soap to hands. Lather well (soap reduces surface tension enabling the removal of bacteria).
 - Clean fingernail area (bacteria may be harbored beneath fingernails).
 - Wash hands thoroughly, using rigorous scrubbing action for at least 15 seconds. Work lather around fingernails, top of hands, etc. (to facilitate eradication of all bacteria).
 - Rinse hands and wrists under running water.
 - Repeat hand-hygiene technique, if necessary (to prevent recontamination of hands).
 - Dry hands with clean paper towel.
 - Turn off faucets with used paper towel and discard.
 - Avoid using hot water for hand-hygiene. Repeated use of hot water may increase the employee's risk of dermatitis.

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- Using an alcohol-based hand rub:
 - Apply the manufacturer's recommended amount of alcohol-based hand rub to palm of one (1) hand.
 - Rub hands together, covering all areas of the hands and fingers, until hands are dry, per manufacturer's recommendations.
 - Clean fingernail area (bacteria may be harbored beneath fingernails).
 - Wash hands thoroughly, using rigorous scrubbing action for at least 15 seconds. Work lather around fingernails, top of hands, etc. (to facilitate eradication of all bacteria).
 - Rinse hands and wrists under running water.
 - Repeat hand-hygiene technique, if necessary (to prevent recontamination of hands).
 - Dry hands with clean paper towel.
 - Turn off faucets with used paper towel and discard.
 - Avoid using hot water for hand-hygiene. Repeated use of hot water may increase the employee's risk of dermatitis.
- Using an alcohol-based hand rub:
 - Apply the manufacturer's recommended amount of alcohol-based hand rub to palm of one (1) hand.
 - Rub hands together, covering all areas of the hands and fingers, until hands are dry, per manufacturer's recommendations.

NOTES:

- Always follow Standard Precautions.
- Soap and water must be used if hands are visibly soiled. If hands are not visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water may be used.
- Change gloves and discard after each patient contact. One (1) pair of gloves - one (1) patient. Gloves are removed by turning inside out and discarding them.
- Change gloves when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site on the same patient.

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