

Hand hygiene technique

Wet your hands under warm running water, apply liquid soap and wash hands for 20 seconds, following the six steps below. Then you should rinse your hands under warm running water and dry thoroughly with a clean towel.



1. Rub hands palm to palm with a circular action.



2. Rub backs of both hands and between fingers.



3. Rub hands palm to palm and between fingers.



4. Rub both thumbs with a twisting action.



5. Link hands and rub backs of fingers in palms.



6. Rub both palms with finger tips, rinse hands under warm running water and dry thoroughly.

Hand hygiene

Information leaflet for
community service users and relatives



Hand hygiene is the simplest
and easiest way of preventing the
spread of infection and disease

Why should I clean my hands?

Hands may look clean but invisible germs are always present, some are harmful which can cause stomach upset, cold, flu or a more serious illness. The most common way germs are spread is by hands. Removal of germs is important to help prevent you, your family and others from becoming ill.

The best way to remove germs from your hands is to use the 6 steps overleaf and take off all wrist and hand jewellery (if you wear a wedding ring it is important that you wash underneath it).



When should I wash my hands?

- Whenever hands are dirty.
- Before and after preparing food.
- Before eating and drinking.
- After you cough, sneeze or blow your nose.
- After handling pets or their waste.
- After using the toilet, changing incontinence pads or babies nappies.
- Before and after carrying out tasks, such as emptying a commode, urinary catheter bag or dressing a wound.

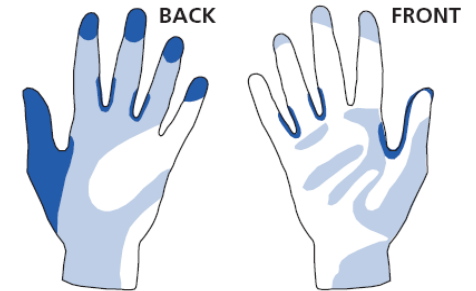
What soap should I use?

- Liquid soap is preferable as bar soap can harbour bacteria.
- Antibacterial soap is not necessary for routine handwashing.
- Best practice is to use liquid soap in a disposable pump dispenser rather than refilling soap dispensers.

Good handwashing can prevent the spread of infection

It is important to pay particular attention to the following areas which have been shown to be those most commonly missed following handwashing.

- Most frequently missed
- Less frequently missed
- Not missed



Ref: NICE, *Infection Control, Prevention of healthcare associated infection in primary and community care* 2003

Alcohol handrub

- Is a practical and acceptable alternative to handwashing with soap and water. The solution should be applied to all areas of the hands using the 6 steps overleaf until the solution dries (approximately 15 seconds).
- It is not effective if hands are visibly dirty, nor against some infections that cause diarrhoea, e.g., Norovirus, *Clostridioides difficile*. In these instances it should **not** be used and hands should always be washed.
- If you are visiting a GP surgery, hospital or care home, you may be asked to use an alcohol handrub on entering and leaving.

Hand care

- Keep nails short, to help reduce the number of germs underneath nails.
- Dry hands well, this helps to remove more germs.
- Use hand cream to protect hands from becoming dried and cracked.
- Cover cuts and grazes with a waterproof dressing.