

WASHING YOUR HANDS

Introduction

Hand washing is important; not only in the hospital environment but in everyday life. Children should be made aware of the importance and benefits of washing hands properly in order to ensure that it becomes a life-long habit. Therefore, it is never too early to teach and encourage them to wash their hands properly.

Why should you clean your hands?

- To maintain hygiene
- To prevent spread of infection
- To prevent contamination of food
- To prevent contamination of surfaces

When should you clean your hands?

- Before eating or handling food
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching animals or animal waste
- After handling rubbish
- After changing a nappy
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- Before and after visiting a hospital ward

Interesting Fact: **Did you know?**

Germs can stay alive on hands for up to three hours.

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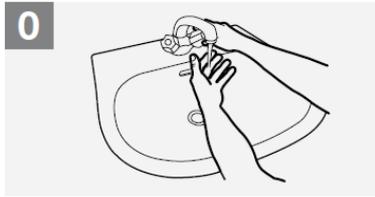
We have between 2 and 10 million bacteria between fingertip and elbow.

Handwash or Handrub?

In most circumstances alcohol hand rub can be used for hand hygiene.

However it is necessary to wash your hands with soap and water when they are visibly soiled and when you have come into contact with bodily fluids such as faeces, blood or vomit.

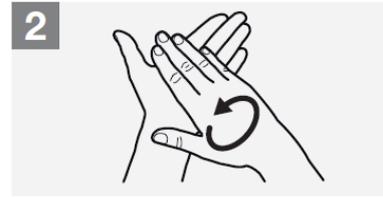
How to Handwash using soap and water



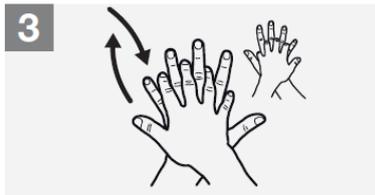
Wet hands with water;



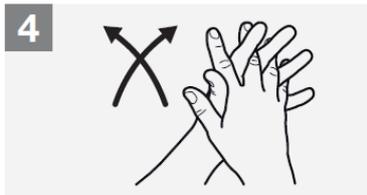
Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces;



Rub hands palm to palm;



Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



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



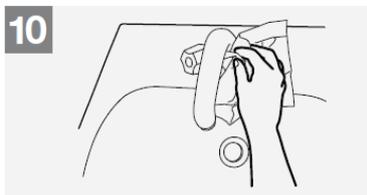
Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;



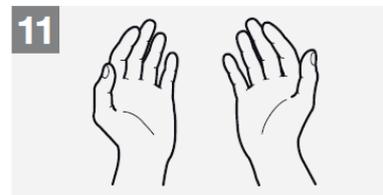
Rinse hands with water;



Dry hands thoroughly with a single use towel;



Use towel to turn off faucet;



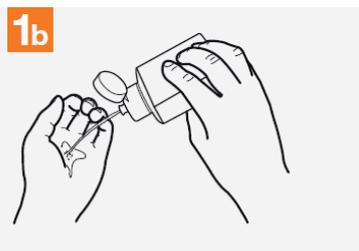
Your hands are now safe.

Acknowledgement goes to the World Health Organisation for the use of their hand hygiene images.

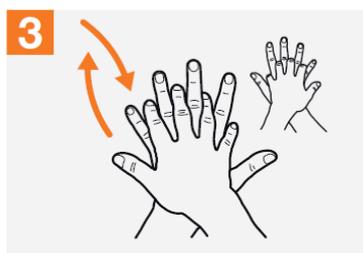
How to Handrub using alcohol gel



1a Apply a palmful of the product in a cupped hand, covering all surfaces;



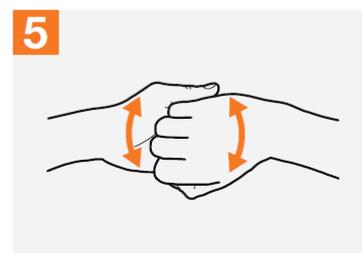
2 Rub hands palm to palm;



3 Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;



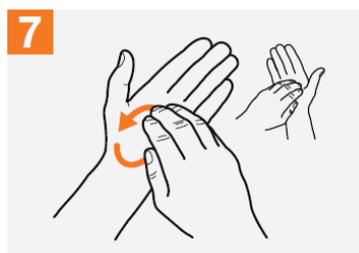
4 Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;



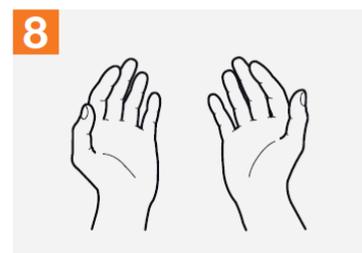
5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;



6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;



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



8 Once dry, your hands are safe.

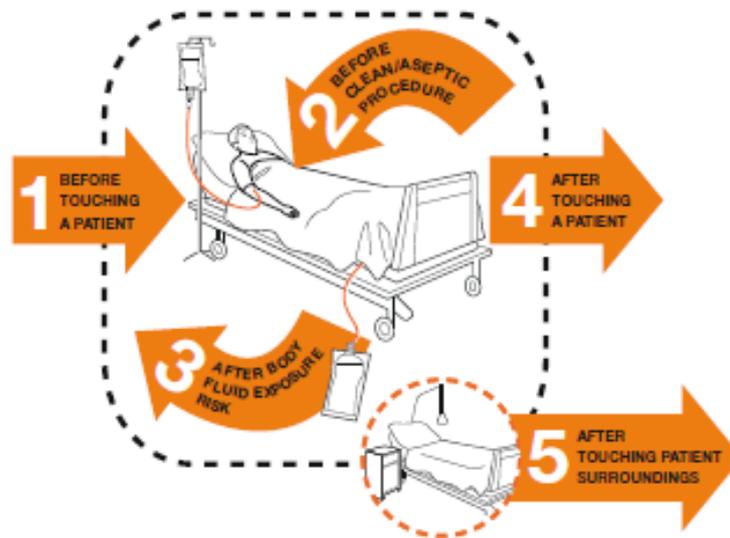
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Hand hygiene at Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust

At Lewisham Healthcare NHS Trust, our staff use 'The Five Moments for hand hygiene' method when looking after you.

The Five Moments were developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) to identify the key moments when health-care workers should perform hand hygiene in order to prevent the transmission of microbes that can cause healthcare associated infections.

When? YOUR 5 MOMENTS FOR HAND HYGIENE



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These are:

1. **BEFORE TOUCHING A PATIENT** to protect against harmful germs carried on your hands.
2. **BEFORE CLEAN/ASEPTIC PROCEDURE** to protect the patient against harmful germs (including the patients own) from entering his/her body.
3. **AFTER BODY FLUID EXPOSURE RISK** and after glove removal to protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs.
4. **AFTER TOUCHING A PATIENT** and his/her immediate surroundings to protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs.
5. **AFTER TOUCHING PATIENT SURROUNDINGS** e.g. any object or furniture in the patients immediate surroundings to protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs.

We also use the Cleanyourhands campaign which is an initiative of the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) which aims to keep patients, clients and service users healthy by reminding staff to clean their hands before and after touching patients.

We want to empower our patients to remind staff to wash their hands prior to care.

Useful links:

For further information on hand hygiene please visit the links below:

[NPSA](#)

[WHO](#)

[NHS](#)

Acknowledgements:

1. WHO Hand hygiene when and how leaflet: http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Hand_Hygiene_When_and_How_Leaflet.pdf
2. NPSA Cleanyourhands patient informatient sheet: www.npsa.nhs.uk/cleanyourhands
3. NHS 'Give Soap a chance' campaign: <http://www.wash-hands.com/hygiene.html>