

Policies and Procedures	
Policy Title: Hand Hygiene, Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer Use for Healthcare Workers (based on CDC Guidelines)	Policy Number: 509
	Effective Date: January 1, 2019
	Revision Date: March 1, 2020
	Approved By: Committee

Purpose

Effective hand hygiene reduces the incidence of healthcare-associated infections.

Policy

- A. All ATC Healthcare Services Healthcare Care Associates (HCA's) will comply with current [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) hand hygiene guidelines](#).
- B. Hand Hygiene means cleaning hands by using either handwashing (washing hands with soap and water), antiseptic hand wash, or antiseptic hand rub (i.e. alcohol-based hand sanitizer including foam or gel).
- C. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are the most effective products for reducing the number of germs on the hands of healthcare providers according to the CDC.
- D. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are the preferred method for cleaning your hands in most clinical situations.
- E. **Wash your hands with soap and water whenever they are visibly dirty, before eating, and after using the restroom.**

Procedure

Indications for Hand Hygiene: Multiple opportunities for hand hygiene may occur during a single care episode. You must also follow all client-specific protocols in place. If you do not understand them, ask your work-site supervisor.

- A. The following are the clinical indications for hand hygiene
 - 1. Immediately before touching a patient
 - 2. When hands are visibly soiled
 - 3. Before performing an aseptic task (e.g., placing an indwelling device) or handling invasive medical devices
 - 4. After caring for a person with known or suspected infectious diarrhea
 - 5. Before moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same patient

6. After known or suspected exposures
7. After touching a patient or the patient's immediate environment
8. After contact with blood, body fluids or contaminated surfaces
9. Immediately after glove removal

B. Wash Hands with Soap and Water

1. When hands are visibly soiled
2. After caring for a person with known or suspected infectious diarrhea
3. After known or suspected exposure to spores (e.g., B. Anthracis, C difficile outbreaks)

C. How to Use Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer

1. Put product on hands and rub hands together
2. Cover all surfaces until hands feel dry
3. This should take around 20 seconds

D. How to wash your hands

The CDC [Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings.pdf icon](#)[PDF – 1.3 MB] recommends:

1. When cleaning your hands with soap and water, wet your hands first with water, apply the amount of product recommended by the manufacturer to your hands, and rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers.
2. Rinse your hands with water and use disposable towels to dry. Use towel to turn off the faucet.
3. Avoid using hot water, to prevent drying of skin.
4. Follow all special procedures in place in place at work-sites.

E. Gloves and Hand Hygiene

1. Wear gloves, according to Standard Precautions, when it can be reasonably anticipated that contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, potentially contaminated skin or contaminated equipment could occur.
2. Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene.
3. If your task requires gloves, perform hand hygiene prior to donning gloves, before touching the patient or the patient environment.
4. Perform hand hygiene immediately after removing gloves.
5. Change gloves and perform hand hygiene during patient care, if
 - a. gloves become damaged,
 - b. gloves become visibly soiled with blood or body fluids following a task,

- c. moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same patient or if another clinical indication for hand hygiene occurs.
6. Never wear the same pair of gloves in the care of more than one patient. Carefully remove gloves to prevent hand contamination.

F. **Surgical Hand Washing**

The following are CDC guidelines. *Follow all client specific procedures or special procedure protocols.*

1. Remove rings, watches, and bracelets before beginning the surgical hand scrub
2. Remove debris from underneath fingernails using a nail cleaner under running water
3. Performing surgical hand antisepsis using either an antimicrobial soap or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with persistent activity is recommended before donning sterile gloves when performing surgical procedures
4. When performing surgical hand antisepsis using an antimicrobial soap, scrub hands and forearms for the length of time recommended by the manufacturer, usually 2–6 minutes
5. Long scrub times (e.g., 10 minutes) are not necessary
6. When using an alcohol-based surgical hand-scrub product with persistent activity, follow the manufacturer's instructions
7. Before applying the alcohol solution, prewash hands and forearms with a non-antimicrobial soap and dry hands and forearms completely
8. After application of the alcohol-based product as recommended, allow hands and forearms to dry thoroughly before donning sterile gloves
9. Double gloving is advised during invasive procedures, such as surgery, that pose an increased risk of blood exposure
10. Bacteria on the hands of surgeons can cause wound infections if introduced into the operative field during surgery
11. Rapid multiplication of bacteria occurs under surgical gloves if hands are washed with a non-antimicrobial soap
12. Bacterial growth is slowed after preoperative scrubbing with an antiseptic agent
13. Reducing resident skin flora on the hands of the surgical team for the duration of a procedure reduces the risk of bacteria being released into the surgical field if gloves become punctured or torn during surgery

G. **Lotions**

1. Lotions and creams can prevent and decrease skin dryness that happens from cleaning your hands
2. Use only hand lotions approved by your healthcare facility because they won't interfere with hand sanitizing products

H. Fingernail and Jewelry

1. Germs can live under artificial fingernails both before and after using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and handwashing
2. It is recommended that healthcare providers do not wear artificial fingernails or extensions when having direct contact with patients at high risk (e.g., those in intensive-care units or operating rooms)
3. Keep natural nail tips less than ¼ inch long
4. Some studies have shown that skin underneath rings contains more germs than comparable areas of skin on fingers without rings
5. Further studies are needed to determine if wearing rings results in an increased spread of potentially deadly germs

References

To access the CDC's hand hygiene guidelines in their entirety, see the CDC website at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html>

Acknowledgment:

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand this policy on hand hygiene, handwashing and hand sanitizing.

Signature _____

Date: _____