

## HAND HYGIENE

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**PURPOSE**

To ensure patient/client care staff practice proper hand hygiene techniques in the prevention and spread of infection per CDC guidelines.

**DEFINITIONS**

- I. Alcohol-Based Hand Rub - An alcohol-containing preparation designed for application to the hands for reducing the number of viable microorganisms on the hands. In the United States, such preparations usually contain 60%–95% ethanol or isopropanol.
- II. Antimicrobial Soap - Soap (i.e., detergent) containing an antiseptic agent.
- III. Antiseptic Agent - Antimicrobial substances that are applied to the skin to reduce the number of microbial flora. Examples include alcohols, chlorhexidine, chlorine, hexachlorophene, iodine, chloroxylenol (PCMX), quaternary ammonium compounds, and triclosan.
- IV. Antiseptic Handwash - Washing hands with water and soap or other detergents containing an antiseptic agent.
- V. Antiseptic Hand Rub - Applying an antiseptic hand-rub product to all surfaces of the hands to reduce the number of microorganisms present.
- VI. Decontaminate Hands - To Reduce bacterial counts on hands by performing antiseptic hand rub or antiseptic handwash.
- VII. Hand Antisepsis - Refers to either antiseptic handwash or antiseptic hand rub.
- VIII. Hand Hygiene - A general term that applies to either handwashing, antiseptic handwash, antiseptic hand rub, or surgical hand antisepsis.
- IX. Handwashing - Washing hands with plain (i.e., non-antimicrobial) soap and water.
- X. Visibly Soiled Hands - Hands showing visible dirt or visibly contaminated with proteinaceous material, blood, or other body fluids (e.g., fecal material or urine).

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## POLICY

All Agency staff providing patient/client care will observe proper hand hygiene techniques.

## PROCEDURE

- I. Hand Hygiene With Soap and Water
  - A. Staff will identify and gather appropriate supplies.
  - B. Staff will wet hands and wrists with water using temperature that is comfortable.
  - C. Staff will apply the amount of product recommended by the manufacturer to hands, and rub hands together vigorously for at least fifteen (15) seconds (with the recommendation of twenty (20) seconds, but either time is acceptable), covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers.
  - D. Staff will rinse hands and wrists thoroughly with water.
  - E. With hands held upright, staff will dry hands and wrists thoroughly with a clean paper towel. They will use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.
  - F. Hot water will be avoided because repeated exposure to hot water may increase the risk of dermatitis.
  - G. Staff will wash hands with soap and water in the following situations:
    - a. When hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with proteinaceous material or are visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids
    - b. Before eating and after using a restroom
    - c. After known or suspected exposure to clostridium difficile, after known or suspected exposure to patients with infectious diarrhea during norovirus outbreaks, or if exposure to Bacillus anthracis is suspected or proven.

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- II. Hand Hygiene with an Alcohol-based Hand Rub
- A. Staff will apply product to the palm of one hand
  - B. Staff will rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.
  - C. The manufacturer's recommendations will be followed regarding the volume of product to use.
  - D. If hands are not visibly soiled, staff may use an alcohol-based hand rub for routinely decontaminating hands in the clinical situations described below:
    - 1. Prior to initial entry into the supply bag
    - 2. Before having direct contact with patients/clients
    - 3. After contact with body fluids or excretions, mucous membranes, nonintact skin, and wound dressings and used supplies (PPE) if hands are not visibly soiled
    - 4. Before moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient/client care
    - 5. After contact with inanimate objects (including medical equipment) in the immediate vicinity of the patient/client
    - 6. After known or suspected exposure to infections or infectious diseases
    - 7. Before handling medication or food
    - 8. After removing gloves
- III. Staff may wash hands with soap and water in all clinical situations.
- IV. All staff providing patient/client care will keep fingernails at a manageable length

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to prevent injury to the patient/client and/or to prevent broken nails and torn cuticles that could provide portals of entry for infection.

- V. All staff providing patient/client care will keep personal jewelry to a minimum to prevent infection or cause injury to the patient/client.
- VI. Education
  - A. All staff providing patient/client care will be responsible for instructing the patient/client and caregivers in proper hand washing techniques and documenting instructions, response, and compliance.