



SAMPLE POLICY - HAND HYGIENE IN A CLINICAL SETTING

Hand hygiene is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection in a health care setting. All practice personnel shall abide by this policy and ensure that proper hand hygiene is practiced in order to prevent the spread of infection.

Appropriate hand hygiene shall be practiced in the following situations:

- ⇒ Upon arrival at work
- ⇒ When hands are visibly soiled
- ⇒ Before and after handling any patient and after handling items contaminated by patients, such as instruments or waste soiled by body substances
- ⇒ Before carrying out any aseptic procedure
- ⇒ Before and after examining wounds or changing dressings
- ⇒ Before handling medications
- ⇒ Before and after eating, drinking, or smoking
- ⇒ After using the restroom
- ⇒ After your hands have touched a surface which may be contaminated
- ⇒ After any contact with secretions
- ⇒ After handling used equipment
- ⇒ After blowing nose
- ⇒ After removing gloves, because pathogens on the skin can multiply rapidly inside the moist, warm environment created by the gloves and because gloves may have undetectable tiny pinholes

Effective Hand Hygiene - Soap & Water

Effective hand washing requires application of soap/disinfectant, water, and friction to all surfaces of both hands and wrists for at least 15 seconds.

- ⇒ Wet hands and wrists with warm running water with fingertips pointed downward.
- ⇒ Hold hands lower than the elbows to prevent bacteria from contaminating your arms.
- ⇒ Apply hand washing agent and thoroughly distribute over hands.
- ⇒ Vigorously rub hands together for 10 – 20 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers, under fingernails, nailbeds, and wrist area.
- ⇒ Rinse thoroughly using plenty of running water so that no soap remains on hands.
- ⇒ A non hand operated mechanism to operate the water is recommended, but if not available, use elbow or towel to turn off the tap.
- ⇒ Dry hands well using paper towel or single use towel.



Effective Hand Hygiene - Alcohol Hand Rub

If rapid skin disinfection is required and hand washing facilities are not readily accessible, a hand rub using 0.5% chlorhexidine in an alcohol lotion may be used, a small volume of which is applied to the hands and rubbed to dryness.

- ⇒ Dispense 1 – 2 squirts into palm of hands.
- ⇒ Rub hands together spreading gel over the entire hand and wrist areas.
- ⇒ Allow to dry thoroughly.
- ⇒ Wash hands after every 10 – 15 uses.

