

Procedure	Hand Hygiene Procedure – HR C19
Document owner	Director Care, Health & Wellbeing
Date first implemented	July 2016
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Date governor-approved	na
Associated documents	
Reference documents	
Initial reviewing body	
Final approval body	IPC Committee
Published on website	No

Purpose	To ensure there is a clear procedure regarding handwashing techniques, frequency, etc, to maintain hygiene levels at College.
Scope	All staff and visitors.
Equality & Diversity	<p>This procedure has been produced with the aim of supporting the College vision to embrace diversity and welcome individuals from all backgrounds. When using this procedure, the College expects members of staff to treat all others fairly and with respect.</p> <p>A member of staff who for any reason finds this or any other procedure difficult to read or to follow should contact the Human Resources Department who will provide help with, or alternative formats of the procedure.</p>

Hands are the principal route by which cross-infection occurs and hand washing is one of the most important procedures for preventing the spread of infectious disease and to avoid getting sick.

Micro-organisms on the hands are grouped into two categories – resident flora and transient flora.

Hands should be decontaminated either by washing or using an alcohol hand gel after every student contact. If hands are visibly dirty and have been in contact with blood or body fluids, the choice for hand hygiene must be hand washing only.

Alcohol hand gel, if used, should be rubbed into hands using the correct technique.

The purpose of hand hygiene with adequate drying is to remove transient microbial contamination that has been acquired during contact. The hands should be dried properly after washing because this reduces the number of organisms subsequently released from the hands.

Dedicated hand washing basins should be available in all clinical areas including all consultation and treatment rooms. Basins should be fitted with elbow operated mixer taps or, where these are not in place, taps should be turned off with a clean, dry paper towel.

Regular hand hygiene training should be provided to all staff, by the Infection Prevention and Control Lead for the College.

How Germs Spread

Washing hands can keep you healthy and prevent the spread of respiratory and diarrheal infections from one person to the next. Germs can spread from other people or surfaces when you:

- Touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Prepare or eat food and drinks with unwashed hands
- Touch a contaminated surface or objects
- Blow your nose, cough, or sneeze into hands and then touch other people's hands or common objects

When to Perform Hand Hygiene

Both the decision to decontaminate hands and what type of cleaning agent to be used should be based on a risk assessment. This must include the likelihood that microorganisms have been acquired or may be transmitted, whether the hands are visibly soiled, and what procedure is about to take place.

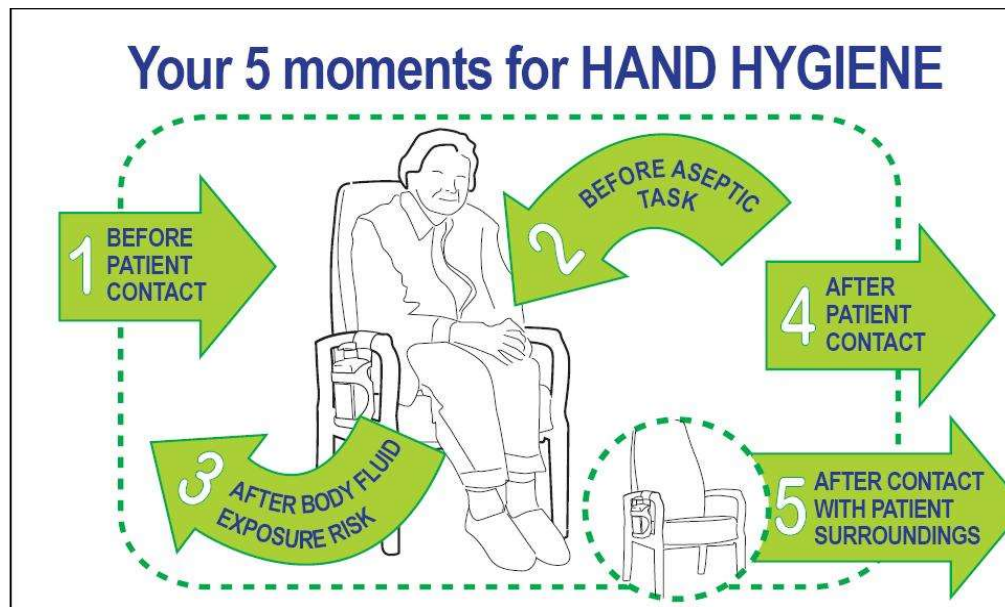
- Before and after donning and doffing PPE (personal protective equipment)
- Before preparing, serving or eating food
- Before and after giving any direct care to each student / client
- Before administering medication
- After any activity that visibly contaminates the hands or when visibly soiled
- After using the toilet
- After sneezing / blowing the nose
- After cleaning activities
- Any other occasions when hands are thought to have been contaminated
- After touching any waste such as garbage
- After touching any animal, animal feed or animal waste

To prevent the spread of germs during the COVID-19 pandemic, you should also wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to clean hands BEFORE and AFTER:

- Touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Touching your mask
- Entering and leaving a public place
- Touching an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens

Five Moments for Hand Hygiene

The World Health Organisation (WHO) have developed the 'Five Moments' for hand hygiene, defining the key points for healthcare workers to clean their hands, these are:



1. Before touching a patient

WHY? To protect the patient against colonization and, in some cases, against exogenous infection, by harmful germs carried on your hands

WHEN? Clean your hands before touching a patient when approaching him/her

2. Before clean / aseptic procedure

WHY? To protect the patient against infection with harmful germs, including his/her own germs, entering his/her body

WHEN? Clean your hands immediately before accessing a critical site with infectious risk for the patient (e.g. a mucous membrane, non-intact skin, an invasive medical device)

3. After body fluid exposure risk

WHY? To protect you from colonization or infection with patient's harmful germs and to protect the health-care environment from germ spread

WHEN? Clean your hands as soon as the task involving an exposure risk to body fluids has ended (and after glove removal)

4. After touching a patient

WHY? To protect you from colonization with patient germs and to protect the health-care environment from germ spread

WHEN? Clean your hands when leaving the patient's side, after having touched the patient

5. After touching patient surroundings

WHY? To protect you from colonization with patient germs that may be present on surfaces / objects in patient surroundings and to protect the health-care environment against germ spread

WHEN? Clean your hands after touching any object or furniture when leaving the patient surroundings, without having touched the patient

Choice of Cleansing Agent

Liquid Soap

Washing the hands with plain liquid soap and running water is adequate for most routine activities. Hand washing with soap lifts transient micro-organisms from the surface of the skin and allows them to be rinsed off.

Alcohol Hand Rub/Gels (with emollients)

Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations. If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,

- Sanitizers do not get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

These may be used in place of soap and water if hands are visibly clean. They are especially useful if hand washing and drying facilities are inadequate, or where there is a need for rapid or frequent hand washing. These agents have disinfectant activity, and destroy transient micro-organisms. If applied for an extended length of time, they will also destroy some resident flora.

Alcohol hand rubs are recommended products for ensuring effective hand hygiene in all care situations **except** when:

- Hands are visibly soiled
- Suspected/confirmed positive case of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- There is evidence of diarrhoeal illness including Norovirus and *Clostridium difficile*
- After removing disposable gloves
- There is direct hand contact with any body fluids i.e. failure to don gloves or gloves punctured


In these instances, hands should always be washed with liquid soap and water.

Hand gel should be positioned at the point of care, kept out of reach of children and vulnerable adults and in a supervised location in communal areas.

Performing Hand Hygiene

Routine Hand Washing










Use liquid soap and water, and follow this procedure:



Public Health
England

Best Practice: How to hand wash step by step images

Steps 3-8 should take at least 15 seconds.

<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">1</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Wet hands with water.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">2</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #f2d9e1; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">3</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Rub hands palm to palm.</p> </div>
<div style="background-color: #f2d9e1; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">4</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Right palm over the back of the other hand with interlaced fingers and vice versa.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #f2d9e1; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">5</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Palm to palm with fingers interlaced.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #f2d9e1; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">6</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.</p> </div>
<div style="background-color: #f2d9e1; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">7</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #f2d9e1; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">8</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">9</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Rinse hands with water.</p> </div>
<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">10</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Dry thoroughly with towel.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">11</div>  <p style="text-align: center;">Use elbow to turn off tap.</p> </div>	<div style="background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 10px; border-radius: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; border-radius: 50%; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;">12</div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto 10px auto;"> <p>Steps 3-8 should take at least 15 seconds.</p> </div>  <p style="text-align: center;">... and your hands are safe*.</p> </div>

Adapted from the World Health Organization/Health Protection Scotland
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*Any skin complaints should be referred to local occupational health or GP.

Alcohol Hand Rub/gels (with emollients)

Use alcohol hand rub, and follow this procedure:

HOW TO HANDRUB?

RUB HANDS FOR HAND HYGIENE! WASH HANDS WHEN VISIBLY SOILED

⌚ Duration of the entire procedure: 20-30 seconds



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



Once dry, your hands are safe.

Hand Drying

Effective drying of hands after washing is important because wet surfaces transfer micro-organisms more effectively than dry ones and inadequately dried hands are prone to skin damage

Disposable paper towels are the preferred option for use in care settings. These should be conveniently placed in relation to hand washing facilities in a wall-mounted dispenser. Foot operated bins should be used to dispose of paper towels to reduce the risk of re-contamination of hands.

Skin Care/Hand Cream

In order to achieve effective hand hygiene, it is important to look after the skin and fingernails. Damaged or dry skin leads to loss of smooth skin surface, and increases the risk of skin colonisation with resistant organisms such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA). Continuing damage to the skin may result in cracking and weeping, exposing staff to increased infection risk, which can lead to sickness absence.

If you are concerned about a skin condition you should initially go to your GP, but if you have a persistent problem such as dermatitis that is affecting or could affect your ability to carry out your job role, you should discuss with The Registered Manager.

An emollient hand cream should be applied regularly to protect skin from the drying effects of regular hand decontamination. Communal pots of hand cream must not be used due to the potential for contamination of the hand cream.

Cuts and Abrasions

Bacterial counts increase when the skin is damaged so all cuts and abrasions must be covered with a waterproof dressing.

Jewellery and Wristwatches

Hand, wrist jewellery and wristwatches must not be worn. A plain ring is permitted; however, great care must be taken to make sure that the finger under the ring is thoroughly dried after washing.

Fingernails

Fingernails must be kept clean, short and smooth and free from nail art and polish. False nails must not be worn.