

HAND WASHING AND HAND HYGIENE

PURPOSE:

Appropriate hand hygiene is essential in preventing the spread of infectious organisms in healthcare settings.

1. Hand hygiene must be performed after touching blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, and contaminated items. Specific examples include but are not limited to:

- a) Before performing invasive procedures (i.e. catheterization, starting IV's).
- b) Before contact with particularly susceptible residents (open wounds, etc.).
- c) Before touching medication or food to be given to a resident.
- d) Before and after touching wounds of any kind.
- e) Before and after providing personal cares for a resident.
- f) After removing gloves.
- g) After touching any item or surface that may have been contaminated with blood or body fluids, excretions or secretions (i.e. measuring graduate, commode).
- h) After caring for a resident with an active infection.
- i) Between contacts with different residents.
- j) After going to the bathroom, nose blowing, covering a sneeze and coughing.
- k) Before eating and before going home at the end of the shift.

2. Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) is the preferred method for hand hygiene. Soap and water are recommended in specific circumstances, including when hands are visibly soiled or during outbreaks of *C. difficile* or norovirus.

3. *C. difficile* bacteria are killed by ABHR, but *C. difficile* spores are not inactivated by ABHR.

4. If your hands are not visibly soiled, use an alcohol-based hand rub for routine hand antisepsis before and after direct contact with residents; and after removing gloves.

5. Alcohol-based hand rub recommendations exclude food preparation areas, where food handlers must wash their hands with soap and water.

6. Use of soap and water:

- a) When hands are visibly dirty;

- b) After known or suspected exposure to *Clostridium difficile* if facility is experiencing an outbreak or higher endemic rates;
 - c) After known or suspected exposure to patients with infectious diarrhea during norovirus outbreaks;
 - d) Before eating;
 - e) After using the restroom;
 - f) If exposure to *Bacillus anthracis* is suspected or proven;
7. For everything else use an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR).

References:

1. IDPH memo February 5, 2019
2. CDC guidelines on hand hygiene
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002)
3. OSHA. *Occupational Exposure to Blood borne Pathogens*. 1991.
4. WHO. World Health Organization.
5. SHEA. Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. 2014

These guidelines are not meant to be exclusive or exhaustive. Guidelines are meant to leave room for the exercise of professional judgment based on individual circumstances.