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Clean hands save lives

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How?

With soap and water:

1. Wet your hands with warm water. Apply a small amount of soap onto your hands.
2. Rub your hands together until soap forms a lather and then rub all over the top of your hands, in between your fingers and the area around and under the fingernails.
3. Continue rubbing your hands for 15 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a paper or clean towel. Hot air dryers can be used in public areas.

With alcohol gel or rub

1. Follow directions on the bottle for how much of the product to use.
2. Rub hands together and then rub all over the top of your hands, in between your fingers and the area under the fingernails.
3. Continue rubbing until your hands are dry.
4. You should not rinse your hands with water or dry them with a towel

Who?

Patients, visitors and residents should clean their hands regularly.

Healthcare staff also know they should clean their hands before and after touching patients, but sometimes forget.

It's OK to ask them to clean their hands.

It only takes a few simple words to help encourage this healthy habit

"Excuse me, did you clean your hands?"

or

"I saw that you cleaned your hands, thank you"



Clean Hands Save Lives

Information for
patients, visitors and
residents



Adapted from a brochure published by the Centres of Disease Prevention and Control, Atlanta, USA

Published April 2011



Why?

To prevent the spread of hospital infections

Following admission to Irish hospitals, approximately 1 in 20 patients acquire an infection, while in long stay facilities 1 in 30 residents develop an infection

Infections acquired/picked up in hospitals can be harder to treat

You can help protect yourself by asking staff and visitors to clean their hands

To make a difference in your own health

Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infections, including the common cold, flu, and even hard-to-treat infections such as MRSA

When?

You should clean your hands:

Before preparing or eating food

Before touching your eyes, nose or mouth

Before and after touching dressings or medical devices (e.g. drips, catheters)

After using the toilet

After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing

Visitors should clean their hands:

On arrival to the healthcare facility

Before and after visiting their relative/friend

All staff working in the healthcare facility should clean their hands:

Every time they enter your room or bed area before touching or administering care to you

Upon leaving the room, if they have touched you or any object in the room or bed area

After removing gloves

With What?

Use soap and water:

When your hands look dirty

After you use the bathroom

Before you eat

Use an alcohol-based hand rub or gel:

When your hands look clean

If soap and water are not available

Follow ward staff instructions as soap and water are better at removing some germs that cause infections (e.g., *Clostridium difficile*)

Use detergent hand wipes or request a bowl of water and soap:

When you are unable to access a sink after using the toilet, commode or bedpan

When confined to bed

