

Topic: Hand Hygiene

Tools and Resources

Project First line Video: [Episode 21: Do we really have to talk about hand hygiene? Again? Yes!](#)

Hand Hygiene in Healthcare: Show Me the Science: <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/science/index.html>

Clean Hands Count for Healthcare Providers: <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html>

Clean Hands Count for Patients: <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/patients/index.html>

Clean Hands Save Lives: A Community Focused Resource: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/index.html>

Chicago Department of Public Health: <https://www.chicagohan.org/en/web/hai/pfi>



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Project First line initiative aims to provide infection prevention and control training for frontline healthcare workers by supporting their efforts to understand and confidently apply the principles necessary to protect themselves, their facility, and their community from infectious disease threats.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is important in healthcare because it reduces the spread of germs from you to patients and the environment, and from patients and the environment to you. Germs are everywhere and as health care providers we are touching a lot of things with our hands throughout the day.

Hand hygiene means cleaning your hands by washing them with soap and water, using antiseptic hand wash, using antiseptic hand rubs like alcohol-based hand sanitizer, or surgical hand antiseptics.

In healthcare, patients are ill, weak and at a higher risk of infection. Healthcare providers are likely to come in contact with blood, body fluids, and other things that might be carrying germs. If we touch something that has germs on it with our hands, and then touch our eyes, mouth or nose we can get sick. If we touch something with germs on it, and then touch another object without cleaning our hands, we have spread those germs and they can now be picked up by someone else. Having clean hands is important in preventing the spread of those germs.

There are parts of the hand that make it easier for germs to grow, like between fingers, under the fingernails and in breaks in the skin such as a rash or cut. Other parts of the hand including thumbs, fingertips and between fingers are often missed by healthcare providers when performing hand hygiene. When cleaning our hands we want to ensure we focus on and clean those parts of our hands in particular very well. Using appropriate hand hygiene technique, including the right amount of product and the appropriate length of time, are key.

In healthcare, we are particularly concerned about antibiotic resistant germs because of the limited treatment options available for patients who become ill from them. Antiseptic hand-rub, such as hand sanitizer, **do not** contribute to antibiotic resistance. Hand sanitizer actually kills germs, including antibiotic-resistant germs, by destroying the proteins and outer membrane that the germs need to survive.

Studies show that some healthcare providers practice hand hygiene less than half of the times they should. Healthcare providers might need to clean their hands as many as 100 times per 12-hour shift, depending on the number of patients and intensity of care.

Upcoming Webinar Series

[Join us](#) for an upcoming webinar series that launches Sept 13 to learn about [Infection Prevention Essentials](#). You can register and find additional information [here!](#) Nursing continuing education credits will be offered for each session.

Please reach out to
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if you have any questions or comments.