

Subject: HAND HYGIENE

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PURPOSE

To provide the indications for hand hygiene and the techniques of effective hand washing in order to prevent healthcare associated infections.

POLICY

All Public Health Services employees working in clinical settings shall consistently practice techniques that promote effective hand hygiene as outlined in this policy.

SCOPE

Public Health Services staff that provides direct patient care and/or directly handles patient care supplies and equipment.

REFERENCES

Center for Disease Control; Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings MMWR October 25, 2002, 51 (RR16); 1-44

PROCEDURE

I. Indications for Hand Hygiene

- A. Public Health staff providing direct patient care and/or handling patient care supplies and equipment shall decontaminate their hands with an alcohol-based antiseptic agent or antimicrobial soap and water:
1. At the beginning and end of the work shift,
 2. After performing personal hygiene, (i.e., using the restroom), coughing or sneezing into hands, touching hair or face,
 3. Before and after eating, drinking or smoking,
 4. After contact with a patient's intact skin (as in taking a pulse or blood pressure),
 5. After contact with body fluids or excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or wound dressings,
 6. When moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient care,
 7. Before caring for patients with severe neutropenia or other forms of severe immune suppression, and
 8. Before donning gloves during patient care and after removing gloves.
- B. Hands shall be also be washed with an antimicrobial soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or contaminated with proteinaceous material.

II. Hand Hygiene Technique

- A. Decontaminating hands with an alcohol-based antiseptic agent:
 - 1. Apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers.
 - 2. Wait until hands are dry (it should take 15-25 seconds for hands to dry when using correct manufacturer's recommendation for volume of product to use).

- B. Decontaminating hands with an antimicrobial soap:
 - 1. Wet hands first with warm water (do not use hot or cold water),
 - 2. Apply 3-5 ml of the soap and rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds,
 - 3. Cover all surfaces of the hands and fingers,
 - 4. Rinse hands with warm water and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel, and
 - 5. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and to open any doors.

III. Nail and Skin Care

- A. Hand lotions are provided in the clinic exam rooms next to the soap dispenser in order to minimize the occurrence of irritant contact dermatitis associated with hand antisepsis or handwashing.

- B. The following procedures related to nails shall be followed:
 - 1. Nails shall be at a length that facilitates proper cleaning,
 - 2. If polish is worn, it should not be chipped, cracked or peeling, and
 - 3. Attention must be given to cleaning around the base of the nail, cuticles, as well as the undersides of the nail tips when washing hands.

- C. Indications for glove use
 - 1. Wear gloves when it can be reasonably anticipated that contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, mucous membranes and non-intact skin will occur,
 - 2. Remove gloves after caring for a patient,
 - 3. Do not wear the same pair of gloves between patients, and
 - 4. Change gloves during patient care if moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site.
 - 5. Always perform hand hygiene after removing gloves.

IV. Education and Training

New employees who are providing care or dealing with patient care supplies or equipment shall receive education regarding the types of patient care activities that can result in hand contamination and the methods and frequency of effective hand antisepsis during new hire orientation, annually and as needed. This material is covered in the Blood-Borne Pathogens (BBP) training.