

<b>Agency: Home Health NH</b>	<b>Title: HAND HYGIENE</b>
<b>Issuing Department: Staff Education</b>	<b>Effective Date: 10/1992</b>  <b>Date Last Reviewed: 09/2025</b>  <b>Next Review Date: 09/2027</b>

**I. Purpose**

Effective hand hygiene removes transient microorganisms, dirt and organic matter from the hands and decreases the risk of cross contamination from patients and the environment. Hand hygiene is the single most important strategy to reduce the risk of transmitting organisms from one person to another. Cleaning hands promptly and thoroughly between patient contact and after contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, equipment, and potentially contaminated surfaces is an important measure for preventing health care associated infections.

**II. Scope**

All visiting staff, All Leadership

**III. Definitions**

Hand hygiene is the general term that applies to either hand washing or use of an alcohol-based hand rub. Hand hygiene will be performed:

1. Before and after patient contact
2. Before moving from work on a soiled bodysite to a clean body site on the same patient.
3. Before donning gloves (wearing gloves does not substitute for hand hygiene)
4. After removing gloves and after doffing any isolation gown.
5. Before handling sterile or clean supplies including medications
6. After contact with blood, body fluids, or excretions mucous membranes, non-intact skin, and wound dressings
7. After handling equipment, supplies, or linen contaminated with body substances
8. If hands will be moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient care
9. Before entering clinical bag
10. After using restroom

**IV. Policy**

All direct care staff will comply with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings to prevent and control transmission of organisms.



## V. Procedures

- A. **Hand washing** with soap and running water: (Note: Hand washing is the hand hygiene method that must be used when in contact with patients with known or suspected infectious diarrhea or known or suspected exposure to spores e.g., *B. Anthracis* or *Clostridium Difficile*.)

Hand washing required when hands are *visibly* soiled:

1. Wet hands under warm running water avoiding use of hot water. Repeated exposure to hot water may increase the risk of dermatitis.
2. Keep hands below elbows and apply soap product.
3. Rub the hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds. Scrub between fingers, including the backs of fingers, around the fingertips and nails, around and under any rings and the areas between the thumb and index finger. Rinse under running water.
4. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel. Do not use any cloth product in the patient's home to dry hands.
5. Turn off water faucet using paper towel to avoid contamination of hands.
6. Discard the used paper towel in a trash container.

- B. **Use of Alcohol Based Hand Rub** - Hand hygiene includes cleaning hands with alcohol-based hand wash or rub when hands are *not* visibly soiled. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of micro-organisms on skin, are fast-acting and cause less skin irritation. The agency will provide alcohol rubs that have a concentration of at least 60% ethanol or isopropanol alcohol.

1. Use of alcohol-based hand rub will be performed using the following procedure:
  - a. Apply manufacturer's recommended amount to one palm.
  - b. Vigorously rub hands together, spreading the solution thoroughly over both, between fingers, backs of hands, between thumb and forefinger, around nail beds and under jewelry.
  - c. Continue until hands are completely dry.
2. Use a hand lotion or cream to help minimize the potential irritation associated with hand hygiene agents.

**Fingernails** - Staff providing direct care to patients are not allowed to wear artificial fingernails or extenders.

1. Will maintain natural nail tips no longer than 1/4 inches.
2. Will not wear nail jewelry.
3. Will maintain nail polish so that it is not cracked, chipped or scratched

## VI. Related Documents

