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## Policy: Hand Hygiene

Date:

Revised Date:

**Purpose:** Hand hygiene is the most effective way of preventing the transmission of healthcare-associated infection (HAI) to patients, staff, and visitors in all healthcare settings. Hand hygiene is a core element of patient safety for the prevention of infections and the spread of antimicrobial resistance.

1. Hand hygiene shall be performed following the “4 moments for hand hygiene”:
  1. Before contact with a patient or patient’s environment
  2. Before a clean or aseptic procedure
  3. After exposure or risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids
  4. After contact with a patient or patient’s environment
2. Additionally, hand hygiene is performed before putting on gloves and immediately following the removal of gloves.
3. Hand hygiene shall also be performed following personal hygiene activities (e.g., use of toilet, blowing nose).
4. Alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHRs) containing at least 70% alcohol shall be used for performing hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled.
5. Plain liquid soap and water shall be used to wash hands when hands are visibly soiled with food, dirt, blood, body fluids and/or a buildup of ABHR.
6. Liquid and foam soaps may become contaminated. Liquid products shall be dispensed in disposable pump dispensers that are discarded when empty. They should never be “topped-up” or refilled.
7. Hand washing sinks shall be dedicated for hand hygiene and shall not be used for other purposes (e.g. equipment cleaning, waste disposal, food preparation).
8. Employees that cannot perform adequate hand hygiene (e.g. wearing casts, dressings or splints, experiencing dermatitis) must not perform tasks that require hand hygiene.
9. Artificial nails, nail enhancements, chipped nail polish, and hand jewelry (other than a plain band) shall not be worn.
10. All employees shall be educated in proper hand hygiene techniques.

### References:

1. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best Practices for Hand Hygiene in All Health Care Settings. 4th ed. Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario; January 2014.  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/2010-12%20BP%20Hand%20Hygiene.pdf>

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2. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario), Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Infection Prevention and Control for Clinical Office Practice. 1st Revision. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; April 2015.  
[https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/IPAC\\_Clinical\\_Office\\_Practice\\_2013.pdf](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/IPAC_Clinical_Office_Practice_2013.pdf)
3. Public Health Ontario's "Just Clean Your Hands" program and resources  
<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/JustCleanYourHands/Pages/Just-Clean-Your-Hands.aspx>