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Procedure: 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 and is integral to the safety of patients and staff.

1. Procedure for using alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR):
 - Ensure hands are not visibly soiled and are dry before use;
 - Apply an adequate amount of ABHR to cover all hand surfaces;
 - Vigorously rub ABHR over all surfaces of the hands and wrists, including palms, between fingers, back of hands, wrists, fingers, fingertips, and thumbs;
 - Hands should remain wet for a minimum of 15 seconds;
 - Hands should be rubbed until completely dry.

2. Procedure for washing hands with soap and water:
 - Wet hands with warm water and enough soap;
 - Apply enough soap to ensure lathering of all hand surfaces;
 - Vigorously rub all surfaces of hands and wrists, including palms, between fingers, back of hands, wrists, fingers, fingertips, and thumbs;
 - Rub hands for a minimum of 15 seconds;
 - Rinse hands under warm, running water;
 - Dry hands with disposable paper towels;
 - Avoid re-contaminating hands after washing. Turn off faucet and open doors with a paper towel;
 - Discard paper towels in waste receptacle.

3. Position hand hygiene products as close as possible to the point-of-care. Wall-mount or place ABHR dispensers in appropriate designated areas away from sinks and in accordance with the Ontario Fire Code. Areas include, but are not limited to:
 - Examination rooms
 - Public areas (e.g. building entrance/exits, desk, waiting room)
 - Nursing stations
 - Medication carts
 - Staff rooms
 - Computer stations
 - Medical device reprocessing area
 - Medication preparation areas

4. Check expiration dates and do not use hand hygiene products beyond expiration date.

5. Disposal and replacement of empty dispensers is recommended. Dispensers must never be “topped up”. Containers must be emptied, washed and dried if being refilled (not recommended).

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6. Do not use sinks dedicated for hand hygiene for other purposes (e.g. equipment cleaning, waste disposal, food preparation).
7. Ensure that hand hygiene products are available for patients and visitors.

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>
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
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>