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Information for patients Hand Hygiene



Infection Control



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What is hand hygiene?

Hand washing removes germs from the hands and protects you from acquiring germs that may cause infection.

Hand disinfection with a hand sanitizer does not remove dirt or soil from the hands like hand washing. Hand sanitizer should only be used on visibly clean hands, where it will destroy germs and prevent them from being spread by contact. Hand sanitizer is fast acting and takes approximately 15 seconds to use. Wet wipes may be used where hand washing is not possible or where hand sanitizers are not available for you to use.

Everyone can play their part in reducing the spread of infections

The most common way germs are spread is by people's hands.

Germs are often harmless, but they can also cause illnesses such as colds and tummy bugs, as well as more serious illnesses caused by 'superbugs' such as Meticillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) and Clostridium difficile.

Effective hand washing reduces the spread of infection. Washing your hands properly with soap and water, and drying them thoroughly after washing can help protect you, your family, children and others.

To wash and dry your hands properly takes approximately 1-2 minutes.

When should I wash my hands?

You should make regular and thorough hand washing part of your daily routine, especially:

- Before eating or handling food
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching animals or animal waste
- After handling rubbish
- After changing a nappy
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- Before, during and after a visit to a ward or residential or nursing home
- After removing any sort of glove

1

Don't forget to encourage children to wash their hands at these times too.

It is ok to remind healthcare staff to wash their hands RJAH is proud to be part of the Clean your hands Campaign

It may feel like an awkward question to ask when someone is looking after you but you are entitled to ask if you are concerned.

What are we doing to prevent health care associated infections?

The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Hospital is committed to providing you with excellent care.

We have specialist staff who are dedicated to infection prevention and control.

They are monitoring, advising and educating staff, to protect you the patient and service user. This includes hand hygiene training and auditing.

A series of poster and educational aids are used throughout RJAH reminding everybody of the importance of hand hygiene

Your 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene

