Hand Hygiene

VCUHS Policy

General Description

Background: The hands are the conduits for almost every transfer of potential pathogens from one patient to another, from a contaminated object to a patient, and from a team member to a patient. Thus, hand hygiene is the single most important procedure in preventing infection.

Purpose: To reduce transmission of microorganisms, the following evidence-based hand hygiene recommendations will be implemented to reduce healthcare associated infections.

Responsibility: Team Members

Policy

A. The Health System follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for hand hygiene; click here for CDC information.

Procedures Overview

1. Hand Hygiene Indications
2. Select an appropriate hand hygiene product
3. Use hand hygiene technique
4. Lotion
5. Nail Hygiene
6. Gloves

Procedures

1. Hand Hygiene Indications

When coming on duty
Before entering or leaving a patient’s room
Before performing invasive procedures
Before medication preparation

Before and after eating
Before and after using the restroom
Before and after touching inanimate objects likely to be contaminated with pathogenic microorganisms, such as urine-measuring devices and secretion collection apparatus; this includes the catheter itself, tubing, and urine collection device.

Before donning gloves and after removing gloves
Between all patient contacts
When moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site
2. Select an appropriate hand hygiene product
   2.1 Hands visibly soiled: Use soap and water
   2.2 Hands NOT visibly soiled: Use soap and water or waterless antiseptic (alcohol based hand rub).

3. Use hand hygiene technique
   3.1 Soap and water. Lippincot procedure for Hand Hygiene
   3.2 Waterless antiseptic (alcohol based hand rub) Lippincott procedure for Hand Hygiene
   3.3 Use of soap and water upon exiting a ContactPlus room.
      See’ Standard and Transmission Based Precautions, IC.EC.003’ for more information on ContactPlus.
   3.4 Hand Antiseptic for Surgical Procedures at sink prior to entering an Operating Room, Surgical Asepsis: Hand Scrub
   3.5 Surgical Hand Antiseptic use while in the Operating Room Hand Antisepsis, OR

4. Lotion
   Use health system provided hand lotion or cream to minimize skin irritation when possible.

5. Nail Hygiene
   1. Artificial nails or extenders, regardless of product type, and any nail polish or nail products are prohibited for team members:
      involved in direct patient care
      with the potential to have any patient contact
      those VCU Health departments providing services or handling items and equipment that come in contact with or provided to patients (e.g. Food and Nutrition Services, Pharmacy, Supply/Distribution, EVS, Sterilization, Case Managers, Pathology, Unit Secretaries, Clerks, PARs, etc.)
   2. All team members regardless of work area or assignment keep fingernails less than 1/4 inch long past the fingertips

6. Gloves
   6.1 Wear gloves when there is reasonably anticipated contact with:
      Blood or body fluids
      Mucous membranes
      Non-intact skin
   6.2 Remove gloves after providing patient care
   6.3 Do NOT wear the same gloves for the care of more than one patient
   6.4 Do NOT wash gloves
   6.5 Change gloves during patient care when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site
Definitions

Alcohol-based hand rub
An alcohol-containing preparation for application to the hands for reducing the number of viable microorganisms on the hands. In the United States, such preparations usually contain 60%-95% ethanol or isopropanol.

Antiseptic hand rub
Antiseptic hand rub: Waterless agent applied to reduce the number of microorganisms

Hand hygiene
General term applied to hand washing, antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub, or surgical hand antisepsis

Hand washing
Washing hands with plain (non-antimicrobial) soap and water

Surgical hand antiseptics
Antiseptic hand wash or antiseptic hand rub performed preoperatively by surgical personnel to eliminate transient hand flora and reduce resident hand flora

Visibly soiled hands
Hands with visible dirt or proteinaceous body substances

Waterless antiseptic agent
An agent that does not require the use of water

Related Documents & Resources

The following is a list of resources related to the current document.

Links to web and other resources:
How to wash your hands poster from CDC.
How to use rub on your hands poster from CDC.
CDC Hand Hygiene Guidelines

Links

Links to web and other resources:
How to wash your hands poster from CDC.
How to use rub on your hands poster from CDC.
CDC Hand Hygiene Guidelines