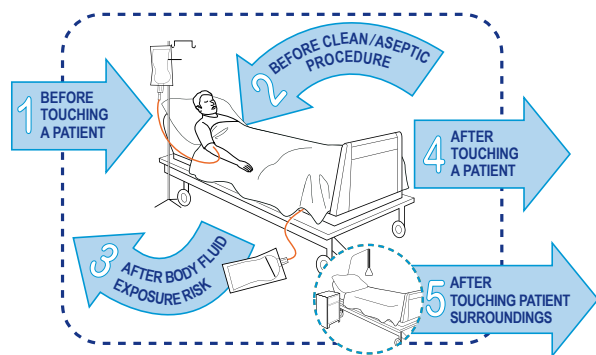


When should I clean my hands?



1 BEFORE TOUCHING A PATIENT	When?	Clean your hands before touching a patient when approaching him or her
	Why?	To protect the patient against harmful germs carried on your hands
2 BEFORE CLEAN/ASEPTIC PROCEDURE	When?	Clean your hands immediately before performing a clean/aseptic procedure
	Why?	To protect the patient against harmful germs, including the patient's own germs, entering his or her body
3 AFTER BODY FLUID EXPOSURE RISK	When?	Clean your hands immediately after an exposure risk to body fluids (and after glove removal)
	Why?	To protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs
4 AFTER TOUCHING A PATIENT	When?	Clean your hands after touching a patient and his or her immediate surroundings when leaving
	Why?	To protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs
5 AFTER TOUCHING PATIENT SURROUNDINGS	When?	Clean your hands after touching any object or furniture in the patient's immediate surroundings, when leaving - even without touching the patient
	Why?	To protect yourself and the health-care environment from harmful patient germs

Based on World Health Organization poster 'Your 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene' and reproduced with their kind permission.

Where can I get more information?

Your Local Health Board Co-ordinator and Infection Control Team can tell you more about hand hygiene policies and training within your NHS Board area.

For more information on the National Hand Hygiene Campaign, visit:

<http://www.washyourhandsofthem.com>

For more information on the Health Protection Scotland Model Infection Control Policies, including Hand Hygiene policy, visit:

<http://www.infectioncontrol.hps.scot.nhs.uk>



Hand hygiene. A guide for healthcare staff.

Germs. Wash your hands of them.

Why is cleaning your hands important?

The most common way that micro-organisms, particularly bacteria, are spread and cause infection is by being carried on people's hands. Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of micro-organisms such as MRSA, *Clostridium difficile*, *Salmonella* and the flu virus.

When should I clean my hands?

Regular and thorough hand hygiene is essential whenever working in an environment or organisation where healthcare is provided. There are five important moments when hand hygiene must be performed:

1. Before touching a patient
2. Before a clean/aseptic procedure
3. After body fluid exposure risk
4. After touching a patient
5. After touching patient surroundings

Hand hygiene is also necessary before and after you have been wearing gloves. For example, hands can still become contaminated upon removal of gloves.

Please refer to the diagram showing the five important moments when hand hygiene must be performed.



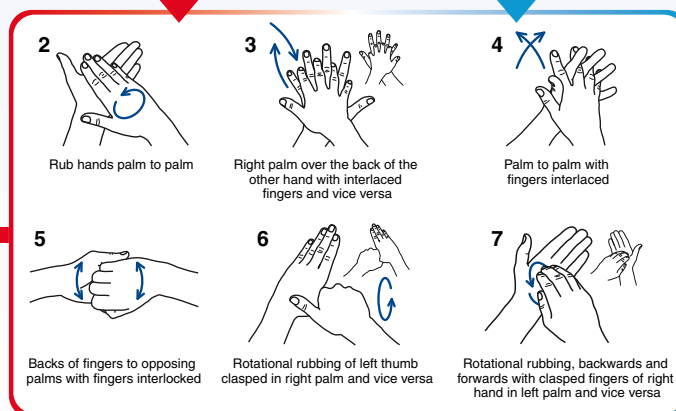
How do I clean my hands properly?

Remove all jewellery, including wristwatches, before cleaning your hands. It is acceptable to wear a plain wedding band, however this must be moved/removed when hand hygiene is being performed.

Alcohol based hand rubs are the recommended products for ensuring effective hand hygiene in all patient care situations except when:

- Hands are visibly soiled
- The patient is experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- There is direct hand contact with any body fluids i.e. if gloves have forgotten to be worn
- There is an outbreak of norovirus, *C. difficile* or other diarrhoeal illnesses

In these instances hands should always be cleaned with liquid soap and warm water and dried thoroughly.



Is hand hygiene an important part of respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette?

Respiratory droplets can be transferred to your hands by a number of ways including:

- Patients coughing or sneezing close to you
- Touching surfaces, furnishings, fittings and items in the patient's room
- Through discarding potentially contaminated body fluids such as sputum

What is correct respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a disposable single-use tissue when sneezing, coughing, wiping and blowing noses
- Dispose of used tissues in the nearest waste bin
- Wash hands after coughing, sneezing, using tissues, or after contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects

