

Why should I wash my hands?

Hands may look clean but invisible germs are always present, some harmful, some not. Removal of these germs is the most important factor in preventing them from being transferred to other people.

Handwashing is the simplest and easiest way of preventing the spread of infection and disease.

When do I wash my hands?

For example:

- Always wash your hands before eating or handling food.
- After visiting the toilet.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- It is good practice for all health care staff to wash their hands or to use an alcohol hand rub prior to contact with your wound, or doing your observations, making your bed or examining you (to name a few).

If this does not happen do not be afraid to ask them to do so.

General hand care

- Keep nails short, to prevent bacteria growing under nails.
- Dry hands well to prevent chapping.
- Protect hands with hand cream
- Always cover any cuts with a waterproof plaster.

How do I wash my hands?

To be effective hands should be wet thoroughly with water before applying soap.

All surfaces of both hands should be vigorously massaged with the lather using the technique described below.

Make sure you rinse all the soap off your hands under the running water and then dry your hands thoroughly.



Palm to palm.



Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum.



Palm to palm fingers interlaced.



Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked.



Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa.



Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you.

If you would like more information

- Ask to speak to a Hospital Infection Prevention Nurse or telephone 0161 922 6194

REFERENCE

PRATT, R.J.et al. Epic3 (2013), National Evidence-Based Guidelines for preventing Healthcare associated infections.

Journal of Hospital infections

Infection Control Nurses Association (2002)

Hand Decontamination Guidelines.

Infection Prevention Society (IPS) association with Regent: London