

GENERAL PUBLIC INFORMATION

# CLEAN HANDS SAVES LIVES

Practicing safe hand cleaning



Germs are everywhere and most are spread by hand contact. Whether healthy or ill, at home, in hospital, or in a personal care home, proper hand hygiene is one of the single most important ways to stop the spread of infection. Hand hygiene is important for everyone; you, your loved ones, and the healthcare providers who care for you. It's okay to ask your health care providers and/or your friends and family to clean their hands. While health care providers are aware of the importance of hand hygiene, they will appreciate the reminder, and you will help keep everyone safe and healthy. Health care providers may also ask you if you have performed proper hand hygiene.



## What You, Your Family and Friends Can Do!

### HOW TO CLEAN YOUR HANDS

Both soap and water, or hand sanitizers can reduce the number of germs found on hands.

### USING SOAP AND WATER:

- Wet hands under warm running water.
- Apply soap and distribute over hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 15 seconds to create a good lather.
- Using friction, cover all hand surfaces including fingernails, between fingers, thumbs and wrists.
- Rinse under warm running water.
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly with a disposable towel.
- Using a clean disposable towel, turn off faucet.

### USING ALCOHOL BASED HAND RUB:

- Apply 2 – 3 ml or dime size portion of product to the palm of one hand.
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces including fingernails, web spaces, thumbs and wrists.
- The product generally dries within 5 – 20 seconds.
- Ensure hands are completely dry before performing another task.
- If your hands are visibly soiled, use soap and water. If not, use a hand sanitizer.



## When to Clean Your Hands

### BEFORE:

- Visiting or touching a friend or family.
- Touching a friend or family's care environment.
- Touching dressings or wounds.
- Taking or giving medication.
- Handling or eating food.

**CLEAN** your hands upon arrival or when leaving a health care facility or clinic.

### AFTER:

- Visiting or touching friends or family.
- Touching blood, body fluids (e.g. changing diapers, dressings).
- Using the toilet.
- Handling or eating food.
- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

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