

# Hand hygiene

Infection Control Department



Patient information leaflet

## Why is hand hygiene so important?

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Germs are invisible to see and are often harmless, but they can cause colds, flu or more serious illnesses and infections.

This leaflet covers when to clean your hands, the products used in the hospital, and some top tips.

Germs pass from person to person by touch so, it is important that patients, visitors, and staff to reduce the risk of spreading infections by cleaning their hands well.

Please remember, even if your hands look clean they can still carry germs; this is why clean hands are so important in helping keep patients safe.

Visitors can protect themselves and others by not visiting if you are unwell.

## When should you clean your hands?

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Please use the hand (sanitising) foam

- When you enter or leave a ward.
- Before and after visiting someone in hospital – hand (sanitising) foam will be at their bedside (point of care) for you to use.

In most instances, using the hand (sanitising) foam is enough, however cleaning hands with liquid soap and water is necessary if:

- A patient has diarrhoea including *Clostridium difficile* (infective diarrhoea) or if there is diarrhoea and vomiting on a ward i.e. norovirus.



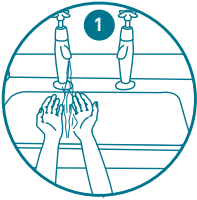
## How should you clean your hands?

The wall-mounted and "point of care" dispensers have pictures on them to show you how to clean your hands.

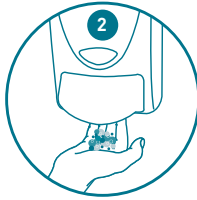
Overleaf is an example of the step-by-step method for cleaning your hands with soap and water.

# Hand cleaning method with soap and water

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Wet hands with water



Apply a single shot of soap



Rub hands palm to palm



Rub back of each hand with the palm of other hand with fingers interlaced



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



Rub with backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



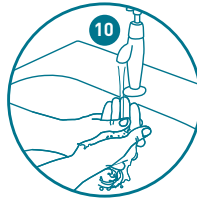
Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using rotational movement



Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion



Rub each wrist with opposite hand



Rinse hands with water



Dry thoroughly

## Top tips

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Everyone, including inpatients should

- Clean their hands before eating, patients can ask staff to assist them if required
- After you use the toilet, commode or a urine bottle
- After blowing your nose or coughing
- Handling any rubbish
- Whenever you see your hands are dirty

All healthcare staff are trained to clean their hands using the step-by-step method, and follow the World Health Organisation's Five Moments of Hand Hygiene, (2009):

1. Before patient contact
2. After patient contact
3. Before clean/aseptic procedures
4. After exposure to blood or bodily fluids
5. After patient contact

## Ask our staff

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- If you feel a staff member has forgotten to clean their hands before touching you please ask them, they will not mind, we often check how often staff clean their hands.
- If you feel unhappy asking the member of staff, please talk to one of the nurses caring for you, so that the matter can be followed up.
- If you find an empty foam, soap or paper towel dispenser, please let staff know so they can be refilled.

## Key reference

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[www.who.int/gpsc/5may/background/5moments/en/](http://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/background/5moments/en/)





## Infection Control contact details

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### Infection Control Team

Royal Surrey County Hospital  
Egerton Road, Guildford GU2 7XX

**Telephone:** 01483 571122 **ext** 4580

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Karen Wright

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