

# Hand hygiene

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A guide for staff, patients and visitors

At King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust we are determined to minimise the risk of infection. So we ask all our staff, patients and visitors to make sure that their hands are as clean as possible at all times.

## Confirming your identity

Before you have a treatment or procedure, our staff will ask you your **name** and **date of birth** and check your **ID band**. If you don't have an ID band we will also ask you to confirm your address.

**If we don't ask these questions, then please ask us to check.**

Ensuring your safety is our primary concern.

## Why is cleaning your hands important?

The most common way that microorganisms, 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 microorganisms such as MRSA, clostridioides difficile (C. difficile), norovirus, carbapenemase-producing enterobacteriaceae (CPE), candida auris and vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE).

## 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 clean or aseptic procedure
3. After body fluid exposure risk
4. After touching a patient
5. After touching a patient's surroundings.

Each time gloves and aprons are required, hand hygiene must be carried out before putting them on and taking them off.

## Cleaning of the hands should be done:

- on entering and leaving a hospital ward or outpatient department
- after visiting the toilet
- before helping someone with their food
- before handling, preparing or serving food
- before eating food
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after coughing or sneezing into your hands

## Alcohol hand rub versus soap and water

In some cases, access to handwashing basins may not be available conveniently nearby so the use of alcohol hand rub is recommended.



Alcohol hand rub is a supplement or alternative to hand washing with soap and water, and is effective at killing microorganisms. It is available for use at the point of care for example, end-of-bed holders on every bed and in consulting rooms.

Alcohol hand rub should **not** be used when:

- hands are visibly soiled
- the patient is experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- there is direct hand contact with body fluids
- there is an outbreak of norovirus, C. difficile or other diarrhoeal diseases.

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

## Skin care for staff

Frequent hand hygiene and use of products can damage your skin, therefore we encourage you to use hand emollients regularly. Moisturisers are provided across all clinical areas.

To protect skin:

- always wet hands prior to application of liquid soap
- dry hands thoroughly after hand washing using disposable paper towels
- use an emollient hand cream during work breaks and when off duty
- do not use or provide communal tubs or tubes of hand cream
- access wall-mounted hand cream dispensers available in staff rooms, including changing rooms and staff bathrooms
- do not store hand lotions or moisturisers on clinical hand wash basins

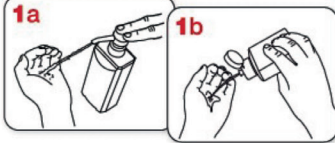
## Bare below the elbows

All staff who enter the clinical areas must be bare below the elbows. Long-sleeved clothing prevents thorough hand and wrist washing, which is vital to prevent the spread of infections.

# How to clean your hands

## How to handrub? WITH ALCOHOL-BASED FORMULATION

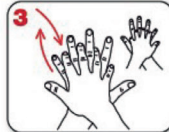
WITH ALCOHOL-BASED FORMULATION



Apply a palmful of the product in a cupped hand and cover all surfaces.



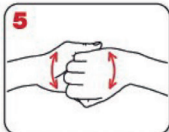
Rub hands palm to palm



right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



palm to palm with fingers interlaced



backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



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



rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



20-30 sec



...once dry, your hands are safe.



40-60 sec



...and your hands are safe.

## How to handwash? WITH SOAP AND WATER

WITH SOAP AND WATER



Wet hands with water



apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.

## Who can I contact with queries and concerns?

If you or your carers have any questions about your treatment or any information in this leaflet, please do not hesitate to ask one of the members of the nursing or medical staff on your ward.

**You can also contact the Infection Prevention and Control teams at our hospital sites:**

### **King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill**

Tel: **020 3299 4374**

Email: **kch-tr.KCH-IC-Nurses@nhs.net**

### **Princess Royal University Hospital, Orpington Hospital, Beckenham Beacon and Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup**

Tel: **01689 863463**

Email: **kch-tr.PRUHInfectionPreventionandControlNurses@nhs.net**



## **PALS**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams.

**PALS at King's College Hospital**, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 3601**

Email: **[kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palsdh@nhs.net)**

**PALS at Princess Royal University Hospital**, Farnborough Common, Orpington, Kent BR6 8ND

Tel: **01689 863252**

Email: **[kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.palspruh@nhs.net)**

**If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Communications and Interpreting telephone line on 020 3299 4826 or email [kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net](mailto:kch-tr.accessibility@nhs.net).**