

## What if I am visiting a hospital ward or care home?

Whenever you enter a hospital ward or care home clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand gel is usually provided at the entrance and/or at the patient's bedside. Sinks and liquid soap dispensers are available in every bay or side room if you need to wash your hands.

## It's OK to ask!

Scientific evidence suggests that increasing staff compliance with hand hygiene at the point of care can dramatically reduce the risk of a patient acquiring a health care associated infection (HCAI).

As a patient, or carer, we invite you to play your part in improving standards of hand hygiene and reducing the spread of infection.

If you think that a health care worker has forgotten to clean their hands, you are encouraged to politely ask them to do so.



## Contact us

For further information contact:

**Leeds Community Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control Team**

on **0113 843 4511**

**Monday to Friday 08.30am to 5.00pm**

## Help us get it right

If you have a complaint, concern, comment or compliment, please let us know by speaking to any healthcare professional. We use your feedback to improve and develop our services.

You can also call the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**. PALS provides non-medical advice and information about local NHS services. Call us on **0113 220 8585** (an answer machine is available out of hours).

**We can make this information available in Braille, large print, audio or other languages.**

*Working together for a safer healthcare environment*

Leaflet produced by Dawn Scholes on behalf of the Infection Prevention and Control Team at Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust.

[www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk](http://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk)

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# Clean your hands



for you, for life

## Why is washing your hands important?

The most common way that germs are spread is by people's hands. Even if your hands appear to be clean they may carry germs.

Germs can cause minor illnesses such as colds and tummy bugs, as well as more serious or life-threatening infections such as MRSA and flu.

Washing your hands properly (or using an alcohol-based hand rub) is the single most important thing you can do to help reduce the spread of infections. This can help protect you, your family, and others.

## When should I wash my hands?

Make thorough and frequent hand washing part of your daily routine, especially:

-  **before** preparing or eating food
-  **before** and after contact with someone who is ill
-  **before** and after treating a cut or wound
-  **immediately before** and after caring for anyone in a hospital ward or care setting (alcohol-based hand rubs are usually provided)
-  **after** handling raw meat
-  **after** coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose
-  **after** touching animals or animal waste
-  **after** handling rubbish
-  **after** using the toilet
-  **when your hands are visibly dirty**

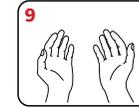
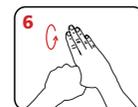
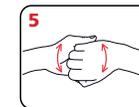
## How do I clean my hands properly?

Cleaning your hands with either liquid soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub will remove most germs. Alcohol-based hand-rub does not kill some of the germs that cause diarrhoea or live in poo (e.g. Norovirus, Clostridium difficile). It is recommended to **WASH** your hands if they are visibly soiled, if caring for a patient with diarrhoea or vomiting, or after contact with body fluids.

Although hand hygiene might seem like a simple task, by following the technique below you will ensure you decontaminate your hands thoroughly. Remove wrist watches and jewellery first as they prevent you from cleaning your hands effectively.

## HAND CLEANING TECHNIQUES

### How to handrub? WITH ALCOHOL HANDRUB

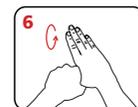


Hand rubs containing alcohol are the recommended products for ensuring effective hand hygiene in all patient care situations **except** when:

- 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, Clostridium difficile or other diarrhoeal illnesses

**In these instances hands should always be cleaned with liquid soap and warm running water.**

### How to handwash? WITH SOAP AND WATER



Adapted from WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety 2006

Adapted from World Health Organization Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care