



Creative Community Living Services, Inc.

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Hand Hygiene Protocol

Rationale: Hand hygiene is a way of cleaning one's hands that substantially reduces potential pathogens (harmful microorganisms) on the hands. Hand hygiene performed well and often is considered a primary measure for reducing the risk of transmitting infection among clients and staff. Hand hygiene procedures include the use of alcohol-based hand rubs (containing 60%–95% alcohol) and handwashing with soap and water.

Hand hygiene is to be performed immediately before touching a client, before moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same client, after touching a client, after contact with blood, body fluids or contaminated surfaces, immediately after removing gloves, when hands are visibly dirty, before, during, and after preparing food, before eating, after using the restroom, before and after treating a cut or wound, after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing, and after handling garbage.

Methods of Hand Hygiene:

1. Hand Washing Using Soap and Water

- Wash your hands with soap and water (instead of using alcohol-based hand sanitizer) when they are visibly dirty, before eating, after using the restroom, and after providing care to a client with diarrhea.
- Wet hands with water then apply soap. Rub hands together vigorously for 15 - 20 seconds, covering all surfaces between hands and fingers. Rinse hands with water and use a paper towel to dry them. Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.
- The time it takes is as important as making sure you clean all areas of your hands.

2. Use of Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

- It is more effective at killing potentially deadly germs on hands than soap and water, requires less time than washing with soap and water, is more accessible than handwashing sinks, produces reduced bacterial counts on hands, and improves skin condition with less irritation and dryness than soap and water.
- After putting the alcohol-based hand sanitizer on your hands, rub your hands together, covering all surfaces until the hands feel dry (about 20 seconds).
- Areas most often missed when using alcohol-based hand sanitizer include the thumbs, fingertips, and between fingers.

Use of Disposable Gloves and Hand Hygiene:

- Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene.
- Always clean your hands before and immediately after removing gloves.
- Change gloves and perform hand hygiene if the gloves become damaged, gloves are visibly soiled with blood or body fluids, when moving from a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same client, and when moving from one client's cares to another client's cares.

Technique Matters with Hand Hygiene:

- Studies show that some healthcare providers practice hand hygiene less than half of the times they should. Healthcare providers might need to clean their hands as many as 100 times per 12-hour shift, depending on the number of patients and intensity of care. Know what it could take to keep your clients safe.
- Use the right amount of alcohol-based hand sanitizer product to clean your hands. Follow label directions. The effectiveness of alcohol-based hand sanitizer depends on the correct amount being applied to the hands.
- When washing with soap and water, make sure the washing portion is at least 15 - 20 seconds. See below for the handwashing technique.

Special considerations for *C. difficile*:

- *C. difficile* is a common healthcare-associated infection that causes severe diarrhea.
- *C. difficile* forms spores that are not killed by an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, so strict handwashing with soap and water must be used.
- The spores can be transferred to clients via the hands of healthcare providers who have touched a contaminated surface or item.
- If you have a client with *C. difficile* infection, make sure to wear gloves when providing cares.
- The most important way that you can prevent the spread of *C. difficile* is by washing your hands with soap and water after touching any potentially contaminated surfaces.

Reference: CDC Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings

<https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/science/index.html#>



(a) Wet hands under running water



(b) Apply soap and rub palms together to ensure complete coverage



(c) Spread the lather over the backs of the hands



(d) Make sure the soap gets in between the fingers



(e) Grip the fingers on each hand



(f) Pay particular attention to the thumbs



(g) Press fingertips into the palm of each hand



(h) Dry thoroughly with a clean towel