

**NHS**

# Hand hygiene

Information for patients, visitors and  
staff

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[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

 **Yeovil Hospital**  
Healthcare

## What is hand hygiene?

Hand hygiene is the decontamination of your hands using either soap and water or an alcohol based hand rub.

## Why is hand hygiene important?

Hands pick up germs we cannot see. They may appear to be clean when in fact they are not. Around 80 per cent of all infectious diseases are transmitted by touch. This means hand hygiene is the single most important thing anyone can do to fight the spread of Infection and so it is especially important in hospital.

## Who is responsible for hand hygiene?

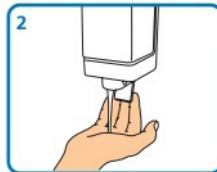
Everyone is responsible for their own hand hygiene. Whether staff, patient or visitor, you should be ensuring you are performing hand hygiene at the appropriate times. Remember, it is ok to ask if someone has washed their hands.

## How to wash your hands

Effective hand hygiene should follow these steps. It should take 40-60 seconds.



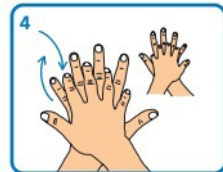
1 Wet hands with water



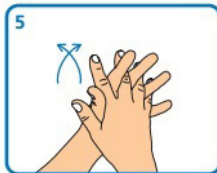
2 Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces



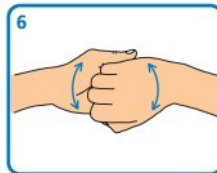
3 Rub hands palm to palm



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



5 Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



6 Rub with back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



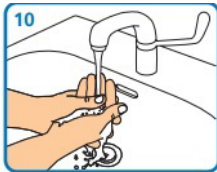
7 Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using a rotational movement



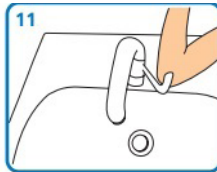
8 Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion



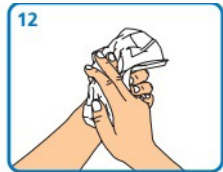
9 Rub each wrist with opposite hand



10 Rinse hands with water



11 Use elbow to turn off tap



12 Dry thoroughly with a single-use towel

## When should I use alcohol rub?

Alcohol rub can be used in most circumstances instead of soap and water as it is much quicker and it is just as effective on most bacteria/germs.

## When should I wash my hands?

- When your hands are visibly dirty
- When dealing with infections such as Clostridium Difficile and Norovirus
- After visiting the toilet
- Before food or drink

## Where to wash your hands

- There are sinks with soap dispensers on all the wards
- There is alcohol gel at the end of every bed or on the patient locker
- There is a hand hygiene station at the entrance of each ward

## Staff should wash their hands:

- before touching a patient
- before a clean / aseptic procedure
- after bodily fluids exposure risk
- after touching a patient
- after touching a patient's surroundings

For more information contact

**Infection Control Team**  
01935 384401

**If you would like this leaflet in another format or in a different language, please ask a member of staff.**

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