

<b>FACILITY:</b> Reading Hospital	
<b>MANUAL:</b> Organizational (Administrative).	<b>FOLDER:</b> Infection Prevention and Control
<b>TITLE:</b> Hand Hygiene	<b>DOCUMENT OWNER:</b> Director, Epidemiology Infection Control and Prevention
<b>DOCUMENT ADMINISTRATOR:</b> Vice President and Chief Quality and Transformation Officer	<b>KEYWORDS:</b> Hand washing, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, waterless hand sanitizer, lotion, surgical scrub, surgical rub, artificial nails, rings, jewelry
<b>ORIGINAL DATE:</b> 9/1978	<b>REVISION DATE(S):</b> 9/2018, 4/2017; 12/2007; 3/2004

**SCOPE:**

Applies to Reading Hospital (including Reading Hospital Rehabilitation at Wyomissing), and its associated Tower Health Medical Group practices. (collectively, “RH”).

**PURPOSE:**

To provide guidance regarding Hand Hygiene practices in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to provide a safe environment and to minimize the potential of organism transmission between healthcare workers, patients, and visitors.

**POLICY:**

1. Hand hygiene should be performed using hospital approved products in accordance with the CDC Guidelines to reduce the transmission or microorganisms in healthcare settings.
2. Artificial nails and nail enhancements will not be permitted while on duty for any staff involved in direct patient care. Refer to Organizational (Administrative) Manual/Infection Prevention and Control folder document entitled: *Nails (Fingernails)* <https://trh.ellucid.com/documents/view/6239>.
3. RH approved moisturizers should be used to maintain skin integrity.
4. Any healthcare worker who has a reaction to a hand hygiene product should be referred to Employee Health Services for evaluation, follow-up and recommendations.
5. All products for hand hygiene, surgical scrubs and hand care must be approved by the hospital Infection Prevention Committee.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Antisepsis - Cleansing with antimicrobial products/alcohol based sanitizer to kill or inhibit the growth of microorganisms

Hand hygiene - A general term that applies to hand washing, antiseptic hand washing, waterless and sanitizing or surgical hand scrub.

Handwashing - Washing hands with soap and water, done when hands are soiled or contaminated with proteinaceous material (e.g. food, blood and body fluids, dirt, grease). The physical action is recommended because alcohols, chlorhexidine, iodophors and other antiseptic agents have poor activity against spores.

- Antiseptic handwashing - Washing hands with an antiseptic soap
- Waterless hand sanitizing - Cleaning hands with a waterless hand sanitizer

**PROCEDURE:**

**1. Select appropriate hospital approved hand hygiene product according to situation.**

- A. Use alcohol sanitizer (recommended except for situations listed in B)
- B. Use soap and water (non-antimicrobial or antimicrobial) when:
  - i. exposed to patients suspected of or known to have *Clostridium difficile*, Norovirus or diarrhea of unknown origin (exiting Additional Hand and Environmental Isolation Precautions room),
  - ii. exposed to or suspected *Bacillus anthracis*
  - iii. when hands are visibly
    - a. dirty or contaminated with proteinaceous material (e.g. food)
    - b. soiled with blood or other body fluids
  - iv. personal choice
  - v. once washed, alcohol rub may then be used

**2. Perform hand hygiene BEFORE**

- A. Providing direct care to every patient (e.g. taking a pulse, blood pressure or lifting a patient in room) includes rooms, wheelchairs, litters, stretchers
- B. Between patient contacts
- C. Donning sterile gloves when inserting a central intravascular catheter
- D. Inserting indwelling urinary catheters, peripheral vascular catheters or other invasive devices that do not require a surgical procedure
- E. Moving from a contaminated-body site to a clean-body site during patient care
- F. Preparing medications
- G. Cooking (food preparation), handling food or eating
- H. Any other appropriate time

**3. Using appropriate product, perform hand hygiene AFTER**

- A. Contacting a patient's skin (e.g. taking a pulse or blood pressure, lifting a patient)
- B. Contacting a contaminated or potentially contaminated source including inanimate objects (e.g. medical equipment, door knobs) in the immediate vicinity of the patient.
- C. Contacting body fluids or excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, and wound dressings
- D. Removing gloves
- E. Carrying supplies or transporting a patient into or out of a room, as soon as hands are free
- F. Using the restroom
- G. Soiling of hands (perform hand hygiene with soap and water first, may follow with alcohol sanitizer)
- H. Sneezing or coughing into hand
- I. Anytime as needed

**4. Using the product**

- A. Alcohol Sanitizers
  - i. Apply product to palm of one hand and rub hands together.
  - ii. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations regarding the volume of product to use

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- iii. Cover all surfaces of hands and fingers
- iv. Rub until hands are dry
- v. Apply hospital approved moisturizer, as necessary

### B. Soap and Water

- i. Wet hands first with water
    - a. Use water temperature that is comfortable to hands. Avoid using hot water, because repeated exposure to hot water may increase the risk of dermatitis.
  - ii. Apply about a dime size amount of soap to hand
  - iii. Rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers
  - iv. Rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel.
  - v. Use towel to turn off the faucet, discard towel.
  - vi. Apply hospital approved moisturizer, as necessary
5. In the event of a water supply interruption, alternative agents are available (e.g. alcohol-based handrubs/gels/foams, detergent-containing towelettes). Coordinate response measures with the hospital's Emergency Management Plan procedures.
6. Routine use of hexachlorophene is not recommended.

### **GUIDELINE:**

n/a

### **PROVIDER PROTOCOL:**

n/a

### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING:**

New Employee Orientation  
Annual Mandatory

### **REFERENCES:**

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**COMMITTEE/COUNCIL APPROVALS:**

Infection Prevention Committee

**CANCELLATION:**

The content of this document supersedes all previous policies/procedures/protocols/guidelines, memoranda, and/or other communications pertaining to this document.