

Hand Hygiene Patient Information



*Inspired
by
You*



**ST VINCENT'S
PRIVATE HOSPITAL**
SYDNEY

CONDUCTED BY THE SISTERS OF CHARITY OF AUSTRALIA

Hand hygiene is the single most important factor in reducing hospital acquired infections.

Our hands may look clean but many germs are invisible to our eyes. We can unknowingly transmit germs on our hands to others and our environment.

When should you clean your hands?

Hand hygiene is a general term referring to the use of soap and water or a waterless hand rub to cleanse your hands.

It is important to perform hand hygiene as you enter and leave a healthcare facility and also:

- After going to the toilet
- After blowing your nose
- After smoking
- After handling/patting animals
- Before, during and after preparing food
- When your hands are visibly dirty



Using soap and water

When hands are visibly dirty:

- Remove excess jewellery
- Wet hands with water
- Apply soap
- Rub all over
- Rinse off with water
- Pat hands dry with paper towel
- Dispose of paper towel in bin
- Using alcohol hand rubs

When hands are visibly clean:

- Remove excess jewellery
- Squirt enough hand rub product to cover both your hands
- Roll to distribute over palms backs of hands and between fingers
- Rub hands together until dry

Hand rub dispensers are located in all patient areas and in high traffic areas in St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney.



Why do hand hygiene?

When we are fit and healthy we can usually defend ourselves against many germs. Having healthy, intact skin is one of the main ways we can do this.

Often our natural defences are weakened when we are not well or after an operation.

It is very important that each time you visit someone in a healthcare facility you clean your hands, even if your hands look clean.

Healthcare associated infections can result in:

- Illness
- A longer stay in hospital
- Slower recovery
- Additional stress for all concerned

Working together

Your healthcare worker should always perform hand hygiene in front of you.

If you do not see them and are worried please feel free to remind them.

We can all play a major role in stopping the spread of infections to our family and friends.

For further information contact the Infection Control Unit at St Vincent's Private Hospital Sydney: (02) 8382 7111

Adapted from

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists and Faculty of Pain
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