



Hand Hygiene

A Critical Infection Control Issue

Session Outcomes

1. Importance of hand hygiene
2. Explore if staff wash hands enough?
3. Why don't staff wash their hands?
4. Review hand hygiene techniques

NHMRC

“Hand washing is generally considered to be the most important measure in preventing the spread of infection.”

“Hands should be washed before significant contact with any patient and after activities likely to cause contamination.”

Does Handwashing Work?

Semmelweis - 1847

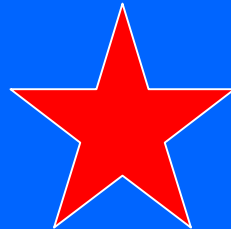
Month	Births	Deaths	% Mortality
April	312	57	18.3
May	294	36	12.2
June	268	6	2.4
July	250	3	1.2



Do Staff Wash Enough?

No

- Wards 16 – 48%
- NICU 29%
- ICU 30 – 81%



Why

Don't Staff Wash
their Hands

(Compliance estimated at less than 50%)

Why Not?

- Skin irritation
- Inaccessible hand washing facilities
- Wearing gloves
- Too busy
- Lack of appropriate staff
- Being a physician

(“Improving Compliance with Hand Hygiene in Hospitals” Didier Pittet. Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology. Vol. 21 No. 6 Page 381)

Why Not?

- Working in high-risk areas
- Lack of hand hygiene promotion
- Lack of role model
- Lack of institutional priority
- Lack of sanction of non-compliers
- Lack of rewarding of compliers

Successful Promotion

- Education
- Routine observation & feedback
- Engineering controls
 - Location of hand basins
 - Possible, easy & convenient
 - Alcohol-based hand rubs available
- Patient education

(Improving Compliance with Hand Hygiene in Hospitals. Didier Pittet. Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology. Vol. 21 No. 6 Page 381)

Successful Promotion

- Reminders in the workplace
- Administrative sanctions ??
- Change in hygiene agent (not in Winter)
- Promote and facilitate skin care
- Avoid understaffing and excessive workload

Hand Hygiene

Easy, timely access to both hand hygiene and skin protection is necessary for satisfactory hand hygiene.

A study by Pittet showed a 20% increase in compliance by using feedback and encouraging the use of alcohol hand rubs

Hand Hygiene Techniques

1. Alcohol hand rub
2. Routine hand wash 10-15 seconds
3. Aseptic procedures 1 minute
4. Surgical wash 3-5 minutes



Routine Hand Wash



Procedure 1
Wet hands and wrists. Apply soap.



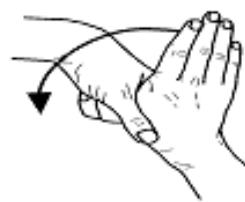
Procedure 2
Right palm over left,
left over right.



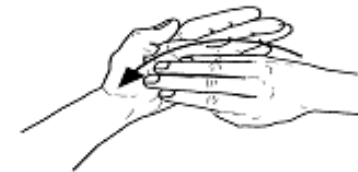
Procedure 3
Palm to palm, fingers
interlaced.



Procedure 4
Back fingers to opposing
fingers interlocked.



Procedure 5
Rotational rubbing of right
thumb clasped in left palm
and vice versa.



Procedure 6
Rotational rubbing backwards
and forwards with tops of
fingers and thumb of right
hand in left and vice versa.

Repeat procedures until hands are clean

Alcohol Hand Rubs

- Require less time
- Can be strategically placed
- Readily accessible
- Multiple sites
- All patient care areas

Alcohol Hand Rubs

- Acts faster
- Excellent bactericidal activity
- Less irritating (??)
- Sustained improvement

Alcohol Hand Rubs

Choose agent carefully:

- Adequate antimicrobial efficacy
- Compatibility with other hand hygiene products

Visible soiling

Hands that are visibly soiled or potentially grossly contaminated with dirt or organic material **MUST** be washed with liquid soap and water





■ Most frequently missed
■] Less frequently missed
■



Distribution of areas missed during hand washing.
(Ref: Taylor LJ, SRN, SCM. An evaluation of hand washing techniques, Nursing Times, Jan 1978).

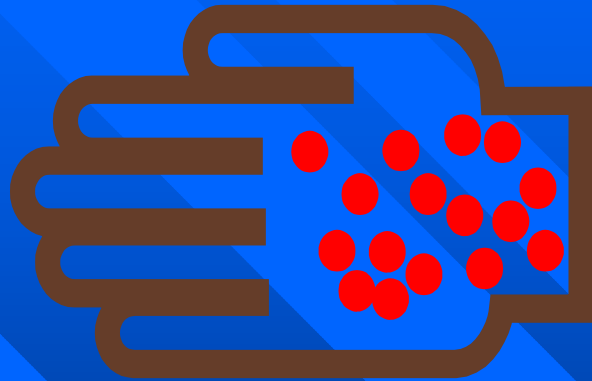
HAHS © 1999

BACK OF HAND

FRONT OF HAND

Hand Care

- Nails
- Rings
- Hand creams
- Cuts & abrasions
- “Chapping”
- Skin Problems



Hand hygiene is the simplest, most effective measure for preventing hospital-acquired infections.

