

# Hand Care

Hand care is essential in preventing skin irritation

## Remember to:

- Avoid soap and water unless indicated.
- Apply a compatible moisturiser (such as that supplied on the wards) to the hands and wrists on a regular basis, for example 3 times or more per shift.
- Cover skin splits and fissures with an occlusive dressing, for example Tegaderm™, to prevent stinging and persist using the hand rub.

## FAQ

- Q. Is hand washing required before and/or after using an alcohol & chlorhexidine based hand rub?
- A. *No. Washing the hands will result in moist skin, which may lead to irritant skin reactions. Frequent use of soap is a primary cause for irritant contact dermatitis among health care professionals.*
- Q. Will the alcohol & chlorhexidine based hand rub cause skin irritation?
- A. *Several studies have proven that alcohol-based hand rubs cause less skin irritation and dryness than hand washing with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand rubs containing skin emollients help to prevent skin irritation.*
- Q. Why do I need to use the hand rub after removing gloves?
- A. *Wearing gloves does not replace the need for hand hygiene. Hand contamination may occur during glove removal.*

## For more information contact:

Hand Hygiene Project Nurse  
Phone/Pager: 4704

## Please report any adverse skin reaction to:

Hand Hygiene Project Nurse  
Phone/Pager: 4704

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ST VINCENT'S  
HEALTH

Hand Hygiene Infection Prevention (HHIP) Project

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Developed September, 2004  
Infection Control



70% Alcohol  
0.5% Chlorhexidine Gluconate

**Information for health care  
professionals**

## Why?

### Alcohol & Chlorhexidine Based Hand-Rubs:

- Result in a significantly greater reduction in bacteria on the skin than hand washing with soap and water
- Reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms to patients
- Reduce the risk of health care professional colonisation or infection caused by organisms acquired from the patient
- Reduce morbidity, mortality, and costs associated with health care associated infections
- Require less time to use than hand washing with soap and water
- Are less irritating to the skin than hand washing with soap and water
- Can be made readily accessible to health care professionals

(Source: CDC Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings, 2002)



## When?

### Use an Alcohol & Chlorhexidine-Based Hand Rub:

- **Before** and **after** direct contact with patients
- When moving **between** a contaminated to a clean body site
- **After** glove use
- **After** contact with inanimate objects in the immediate vicinity of the patient, including medical equipment and charts
- **Before** and **after** inserting in-dwelling urinary catheters, peripheral vascular catheters or other invasive devices that do not require a surgical hand wash

### Hand-washing is indicated only:

- Before eating
- After using a bathroom
- After removing powdered gloves
- When hands are visibly dirty
- If exposed to *Clostridium difficile*

(Source: CDC Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings, 2002)

### When handwashing:

- Do not apply soap to dry skin, always moisten skin first to prevent skin irritation
- Do not combine soaps

## How?

1. Squirt once onto the palm of your hand



2. Rub hands together



3. Roll over all surfaces until dry



### When using a hand rub:

- Apply the hand rub to dry skin only
- Do not wash hands immediately after application