

Preventing spread of infection

Concerns about traditional hand hygiene practices have led to the development of a new range of products.

Included are alcohol-chlorhexidine hand rubs (DeBug), Prowipes (alcohol handwipes) and Microshield moisturiser.

Northeast Health Wangaratta is one of six hospitals, (four Metropolitan, two rural) to successfully gain a Victorian Quality Council grant to participate in the Hand Hygiene Project in which these products are being trialled.

The products were officially launched in One East on October 18 by CEO Peter McGregor and DON Christine Giles.

Board of Management President Geoff Dinning and One East Nursing Unit Manager Linda Earl conducted the ribbon cutting ceremony.

DeBug has since been launched into the following areas, Ground West, Paediatrics, Ground East, Midwifery, Critical Care, Dialysis and Oncology. During the next few months DeBug and associated products will be introduced to other departments at NHW. It was also promoted at the October Staff Forum.

Poor hand hygiene practices (hand-washing, hand disinfection) among healthcare workers is known to be the largest problem associated with hospital acquired infections and is also a major factor in the spread of antibiotic resistant pathogens within hospitals.

Despite this, efforts to improve the rate of hand hygiene compliance has generally been ineffective or poorly sustained. Many barriers to appropriate hand hygiene have been reported.

These include:

- Hand hygiene agents causing skin irritation and dryness
- Patient needs are perceived to be more important than hand hygiene



At the launch are (from left): Clinical Research Coordinator-Hand Hygiene Project Roger Gergory, NHW Board of Management President Geoff Dinning and Infection Control Consultant Jason O'Keefe.

- Sinks/basins are often inconveniently located or not available
- Insufficient time for hand hygiene due to high workload and under staffing
- Inadequate knowledge of guidelines or protocols for hand hygiene
- The perceived idea that glove use dispenses with the need for additional hand hygiene
- Lack of good role models
- Lack of recognition of the risk of cross transmission of microbial pathogens and of scientific information showing a definitive impact of improved hand hygiene on hospital acquired infection rates

- Simple forgetfulness by staff

On-going research has demonstrated that alcohol-chlorhexidine hand rubs are better than traditional soap and water because:

- They require less time to use
- They result in a significantly greater reduction Of micro-organisms than soap and water
- They are less irritating to the skin
- They can be made readily accessible to health care workers.

Health care workers should perform hand hygiene before and after every patient contact to prevent patients becoming colonised and/or infected with hospital acquired organisms from other patients.

Minimisation of hand hygiene related irritant contact dermatitis is essential for improved hand hygiene compliance.

The provision of moisturising skin care products and ongoing staff education along with a supportive attitude to any reported problems will be provided to all staff. It is recommended that moisturising lotion be applied four times per shift.

DeBug handrub can be found located on the end of all adult patient beds within the acute wards of NHW and will be located in the imprest cupboard in each unit.

Prowipes can be found attached to portable BP machines, dressing trolleys and in areas where frequently used equipment is located. Prowipes can be ordered via the stores dept, item No. 671.

Moisturising lotion is now available at hand basins in corridors, in 4 bed rooms and from the Pharmacy Department.

For further information contact the Infection Prevention & Control Department at Northeast Health Wangaratta on Ext 240 or email debug@nhw.hume.org.au.

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is coming. . .

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Deadline

Monday,
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