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's 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 did 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 your hospital or the National Hand Hygiene Initiative.

T: +61 2 9126 3511
E: handhygiene@safetyandquality.gov.au

NHHI
National Hand Hygiene Initiative

Information for Patients and Visitors

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 & 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 & after preparing food
- When your hands are visibly dirty

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, back of hands & between fingers
- Rub hands together until dry

Bottles of hand rub should be located in all patient care areas and in high traffic areas in your health care facility.

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

Hand basins are located through out all healthcare facilities.