

BRAIN BOOSTER

BY FUSION

**IMPORTANCE OF HAND
HYGIENE FOR CARE HOME STAFF**

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Empowering Outstanding Care Through Technology

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WHAT IS HAND HYGIENE

WASH YOUR
HANDS



Hand hygiene is one of the most important infection prevention and control measures in a care home.

Care home staff provide close personal care, support residents with meals, medicines, mobility, continence care, clinical tasks and day-to-day activities.

Because of this close contact, germs can be transferred easily between hands, residents, equipment, surfaces and shared environments.

Cleaning hands at the right time, using the right method, helps protect residents, staff, visitors and the wider community.

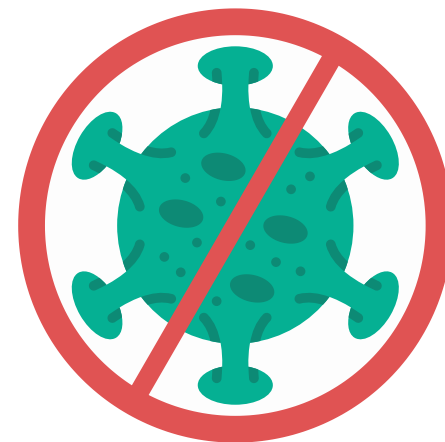
Why Hand Hygiene Matters



Many residents in care homes are older, frail, immunocompromised or living with long-term health conditions. This can make them more vulnerable to infections and more likely to experience serious complications. Effective hand hygiene reduces the chance of harmful microorganisms being passed from one person to another and supports safe, dignified care.

Hand Hygiene:

- ✓ Reduces the spread of bacteria, viruses and other infectious agents.
- ✓ Helps prevent outbreaks of illnesses such as diarrhoea and vomiting, influenza, respiratory infections and other transmissible infections.
- ✓ Protects residents who may be at higher risk of severe illness.
- ✓ Protects staff by reducing exposure to infectious material.
- ✓ Supports compliance with infection prevention and control expectations in adult social care.
- ✓ Promotes confidence among residents, relatives, visitors, managers and regulators.

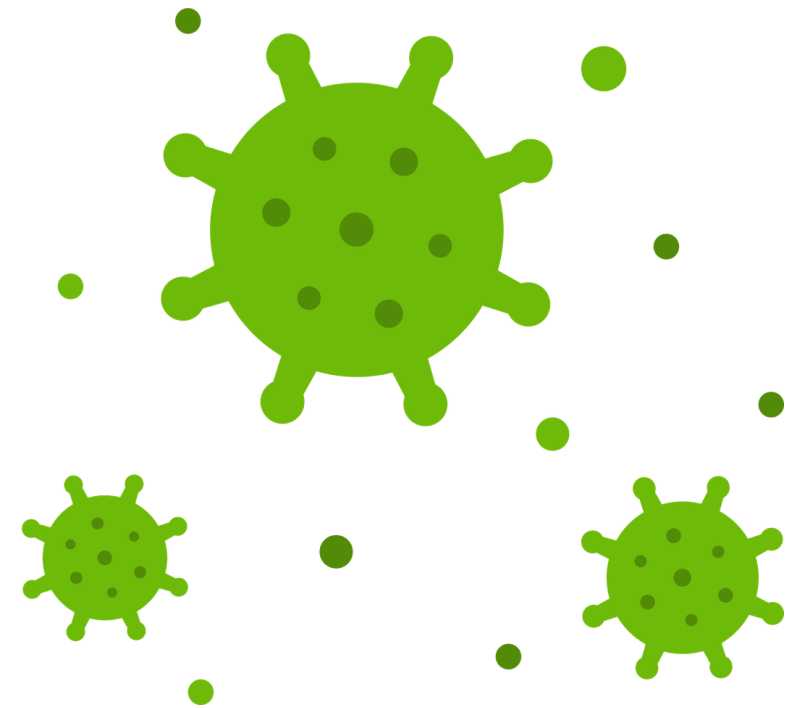


How Germs Spread Through Hands

Hands can become contaminated during routine care tasks, even when they look clean. If hands are not cleaned before the next task, those germs can be transferred to another resident, a clean surface, food, medicine or clinical equipment.

● Germs may be picked up after touching:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ➤ Skin. | ➤ Door handles. |
| ➤ Body fluids. | ➤ Call bells. |
| ➤ Contenance products. | ➤ Mobility aids. |
| ➤ Used tissues. | ➤ Dining areas. |
| ➤ Laundry. | ➤ Bathrooms. |
| ➤ Waste. | ➤ Other frequently touched surfaces. |
| ➤ Shared equipment. | |



When Staff Should Clean Hands

Hand hygiene should be carried out at key points during care delivery. Staff should clean their hands before and after contact with residents, before clean or aseptic procedures, after exposure or possible exposure to blood or body fluids, before handling food or drink, after removing gloves and after touching potentially contaminated surfaces or equipment.

- 1 Before touching a resident or providing personal care.
- 2 Before preparing, serving or assisting with food and drinks.
- 3 Before administering or supporting with medicines.
- 4 Before wound care, catheter care or any clean procedure.
- 5 After assisting with toileting, continence care or personal hygiene.
- 6 After contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions or contaminated items.
- 7 After removing gloves, aprons or other personal protective equipment.
- 8 After coughing, sneezing, using tissues or supporting a resident with respiratory hygiene.
- 9 After touching shared equipment, cleaning materials, waste, laundry or frequently touched surfaces.
- 10 Before moving from one resident to another or from a contaminated task to a clean task.

Soap and Water or Alcohol Hand Rub?



Use soap and water when:

- ✓ Hands are visibly dirty or sticky.
- ✓ There has been contact with blood or body fluids.
- ✓ Supporting a resident with diarrhoea or vomiting.
- ✓ After using the toilet or assisting someone with toileting.



Alcohol hand rub may be used when:

- ✓ Hands are visibly clean.
- ✓ There has been no exposure to blood or body fluids.
- ✓ Moving between routine care tasks where hands are not soiled.
- ✓ Handwashing facilities are not immediately available and hands are suitable for hand rub.

Effective Handwashing Techniques



Good technique is as important as frequency.

Staff should wash all areas of the hands and wrists for **at least 20 seconds** using liquid soap and warm running water, then dry thoroughly using disposable paper towels. Particular attention should be paid to fingertips, thumbs, between fingers, backs of hands and wrists, as these areas are often missed.

- 1 Wet hands under warm running water.
- 2 Apply liquid soap.
- 3 Rub palms together.
- 4 Clean the backs of both hands.
- 5 Clean between fingers and around thumbs.
- 6 Clean fingertips, nails and wrists.
- 7 Rinse thoroughly under running water.
- 8 Dry completely with a disposable paper towel.
- 9 Use the paper towel to turn off the tap if required.

Gloves Do Not Replace Hand Hygiene

Gloves are important when there is a risk of contact with blood, body fluids, non-intact skin, mucous membranes, contaminated equipment or harmful substances. However, gloves do not remove the need for hand hygiene. Hands can become contaminated when gloves are removed, and gloves can spread germs if worn for too long or used for more than one task.

Staff Should:

- ✓ Clean hands before putting gloves on.
- ✓ Use gloves only for the task that requires them.
- ✓ Change gloves between residents and between dirty and clean tasks.
- ✓ Remove gloves immediately after the task is complete.
- ✓ Clean hands straight after removing gloves.
- ✓ Never wear the same gloves around the care home or while touching clean surfaces.



Hand Hygiene is Everyone's Responsibility

Preparing for Safe Hand Hygiene:

Staff should be able to clean their hands effectively at the point of care. Hand hygiene facilities should be accessible, well-stocked and maintained. Staff should follow a “bare below the elbows” approach where required by local policy, keep fingernails short and clean, avoid false nails or nail polish where these may interfere with safe practice, and cover cuts or grazes with a waterproof dressing.

Supporting Residents and Visitors:

Hand hygiene is everyone's responsibility. Staff should support residents to clean their hands before meals, after using the toilet, after coughing or sneezing, after contact with pets or shared activities, and whenever hands are visibly dirty. Visitors should also be encouraged to clean their hands when entering and leaving the home, before eating with residents, and after using tissues or visiting someone who is unwell.



Training, Monitoring and Good Practice

Care home providers should ensure that staff receive appropriate infection prevention and control training, including when and how to clean hands, how to use gloves safely and what to do during outbreaks. Managers should promote a positive safety culture where hand hygiene is expected, easy to carry out and regularly reinforced through supervision, audits, reminders and role modelling.

Providers Should:

- ✓ Provide induction and refresher training for all staff.
- ✓ Keep hand hygiene products available and stocked.
- ✓ Display clear reminders in appropriate areas.
- ✓ Audit practice and give supportive feedback.
- ✓ Review hand hygiene practice after incidents, infections or outbreaks.
- ✓ Encourage staff to speak up if facilities, products or practice need improvement.



Common Barriers and How to Overcome Them

Barrier

Practical Response

Busy shifts and competing priorities

Place products close to care areas and reinforce hand hygiene as part of every task

Dry or sore skin

Provide suitable skin-friendly products and encourage staff to report skin concerns early.

Over-reliance on gloves

Remind staff that gloves are single-task items and do not replace cleaning hands

Residents needing support

Offer prompts, wipes, access to sinks or hand hygiene support before meals and after toileting

Unclear expectations

Use training, posters, supervision and audits to create consistent standards

Key Message



Small actions.

Big impact.

Clean hands save lives.

Hand hygiene is a simple action with a significant impact. For care home staff, it is a professional responsibility and a core part of safe, compassionate care. Cleaning hands at the right moments, using the correct method, and supporting residents and visitors to do the same helps reduce infection risks, prevent outbreaks and protect the health and wellbeing of everyone in the care home.

Discover more Fusion Brain Booster resources by following the link below.

[Fusion Care Software Blogs & Resources](#)