



Trinity Health

Hand Hygiene

TRINITY HEALTH REQUIRED EDUCATION

Hand Hygiene

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Course Description

Welcome to our annual course on Hand Hygiene for healthcare professionals. This course focuses on related topics like the importance of hand hygiene, how germs are transmitted, and how and when to clean hands.

No matter your role at Trinity Health, preventing the spread of germs is critical to protecting the health of patients, ourselves, and each other.

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Introduction

Lesson 1 of 5



Course Overview

This course covers the following topics:

- Transmission of germs
- Proper Hand Hygiene
- When Should You Clean Your Hands?
- Course Summary

A Quick Glossary of Terms

Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer (ABHS)

An alcohol-containing preparation (liquid, gel or foam) designed for application to the hands to inactivate microorganisms and/or temporarily suppress their growth.

Aseptic Tasks

Steps healthcare providers use to prevent the spread of infection. These include placing barriers like drapes prior to a procedure, using sterile equipment and following practices to prevent contamination of sterile equipment during use like starting an IV.

Germs

Microscopic bacteria, viruses, fungi, and protozoa. Germs live in our air, soil, water and in and on our bodies. Some germs are helpful, others are harmful.

Hand Hygiene

Cleaning your hands by using either handwashing (washing hands with soap and water), or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS).

Transmission of Germs

Lesson 2 of 5



Germs are everywhere, and we can spread them – without knowing it – to other surfaces, things, and people.

In healthcare facilities, you are likely to come into contact with things that carry germs like respiratory droplets, blood and other body fluids, and waste during patient care or working in direct patient care areas. Even if you don't work in patient care areas, there are germs on surfaces that are touched by many people so it is important for everyone to keep their hands clean.

If we touch something that has germs on it with our hands and then touch our eyes, mouth, or nose without cleaning our hands first, we could get sick. If we touch something with germs on it, and then touch something else without cleaning our hands first, we can spread germs that can be picked up by someone else. This is how a lot of germs spread in healthcare – not just viruses.

Did you know?



All the surfaces that healthcare workers touch provide opportunities for germs to spread and make people sick.



Healthcare workers in hospital units touch an average of 15 different surfaces during a single patient interaction!

Proper Hand Hygiene

Lesson 3 of 5

Methods for Cleaning Your Hands

There are two primary ways to clean your hands to ensure proper hygiene:

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS) – usually in the form of liquid, gel or foam
- Handwashing with soap and water

Note: ABHS is the preferred way to clean hands, as it is more effective than handwashing for most instances where cleaning of hands is needed.

How to Correctly Use Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer (ABHS)



Apply the gel.

Tip: Apply enough ABHS to cover all surfaces of the hands.



Rub your hands together for at least 15 seconds.

Tip: Need a timer? Hum the “ABC” song slowly, twice.



Don't forget to apply under fingernails, backs of your hands, between your fingers, and thumbs.

How to Correctly Clean Hands with Soap and Water

Wet



Wet your hands and apply soap.

Lather



Lather with soap. Scrub the lather under your fingernails, backs of your hands, and between fingers.

Scrub



Scrub for at least 20 seconds.

* Again, you may hum the “ABC” song slowly, twice.

Rinse



Rinse under clean running water.

Dry



Dry with a clean towel.

Maintaining Healthy Hand Skin and Fingernails

Be sure to read and understand policies at your ministry that include fingernail care related to hand hygiene. In general:

- Healthcare personnel (HCP) should maintain short, natural fingernails.
- Nails should not extend past the fingertip.
- HCPs who provide direct or indirect care in high-risk areas (e.g., ICU, perioperative) should not wear artificial fingernail extenders.
- Check local ministry policy – colleagues and clinicians that provide surgical or other invasive procedures (e.g., interventional cardiology), care for neonates in NICU, etc. often have additional requirements for keeping nails short and healthy.

When Should You Clean Your Hands?

Lesson 4 of 5

Interacting with Patients

When providing care for a patient, you should clean your hands before and after the interaction.

BEFORE

- Immediately before touching a patient.
- Before performing an aseptic task, such as placing an indwelling device or handling invasive medical devices.
- Before moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same patient.
- Before changing wound dressings or bandages.







AFTER

- After touching a patient.
- After touching the patient's surroundings, such as bed rails, bedside tables, doorknobs, remote controls, or the phone.
- After contact with blood, body fluids, or contaminated surfaces.
- After changing wound dressings or bandages.
- Immediately after glove removal.

General Hand Hygiene Standards

Even when not interacting with patients, the following are situations where proper hand hygiene is important.

	<p>When hands are visibly soiled.</p>
	<p>Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.</p>
	<p>Before preparing or eating food.</p>

	<p>After contact with blood or bodily fluids.</p>
	<p>After caring for someone with vomiting or diarrhea.</p>
	<p>After using the restroom.</p>
	<p>After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.</p>

Monitoring Adherence to Hand Hygiene

Many organizations recommend monitoring of colleagues and providers adherence with hand hygiene. This is also part of ministry policies.

Hand hygiene can be monitored in a few different ways, including using an electronic monitoring system or a person to observe for hand hygiene. In addition to these, colleagues are encouraged to monitor their co-workers for use of hand hygiene when there is an indication to clean hands. Reminding use is good for all, including co-workers.

Course Summary

Lesson 5 of 5

In this course, you learned important information related to hand hygiene.

Remember:

- Hand hygiene is the most important way to prevent the spread of germs.
- It helps keeps you, your colleagues, and the patients we serve safe.
- For most indications for cleaning hands, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer (ABHS). If your hands or even your gloved hands are visibly soiled, use soap and water.