

Effective Hand Washing



1. Palm to palm



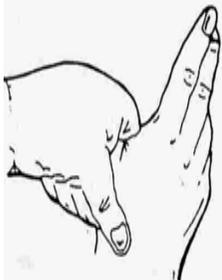
2. Right palm over left dorsum and left palm over right dorsum



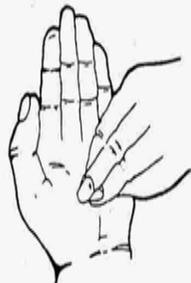
3. Palm to palm fingers interlaced



4. Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked

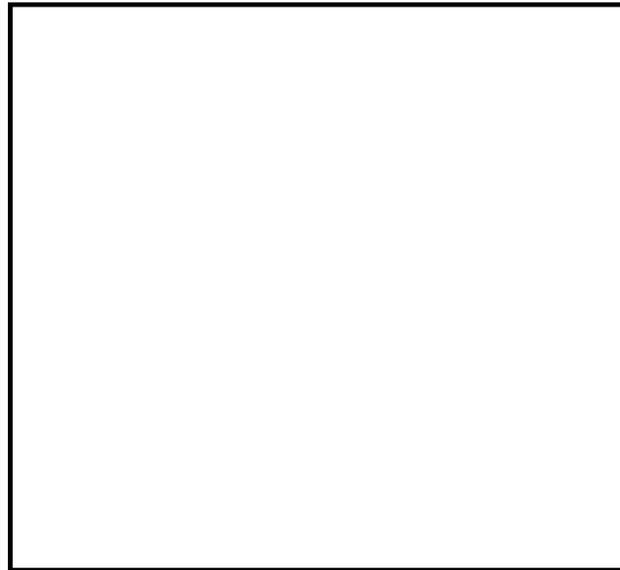


5. Rotational rubbing of right thumb clasped in left palm and vice versa



6. Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use the box provided below to remind you.



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St. John's Hospital
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Hand Hygiene



Information Leaflet

**For
Patients,
Relatives
and Visitors**

Why is washing your hands important?

The most common way germs are spread is by people's hands. Germs are easily picked up on hands when touching surfaces like door handles, telephones, when using the toilet or handling rubbish. These germs are then easily transferred from hands to surfaces and food. Some of the germs that are routinely picked up on hands can cause infections by touching our eyes, mouths or open cuts.

The good news is that these germs are easily removed by hand washing with soap and water or rubbing clean hands with an alcohol hand gel.

Why is hand hygiene important in health care?

People receiving healthcare may be more vulnerable to infection from germs carried on their hands or other people's as:-

- Some illnesses affect the body's ability to fight infection.
- Germs can gain access to the body through breaks in the skin for example wounds.
- Some drugs affect the body's ability to fight infection.
- Older people and babies are more vulnerable to infection.

When should I wash my hands?

Patients please clean your hands;

- Before eating or handling food
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Before leaving your room or ward

Relatives/Visitors please clean your hands;

- Before visiting your relative or friend.
- Before leaving your relative/friends room or ward.
- Before helping your relative/friend with his/her meal.
- Before visiting another patient.
- On entering and upon leaving rooms with an isolation sign on the door.

Staff should clean their hands;

- Before patient contact.
- Before an aseptic/clean technique
- After body fluid exposure risk
- After patient contact
- After contact with patient surroundings

Of course, it's also important to wash your hands whenever they look dirty.

All staff are happy for you to remind them to clean their hands before they touch you.

How should I wash my hands?

Wash your hands with soap and warm running water.

- Wet your hands and apply soap from the dispenser.
- Rub your hands vigorously ensuring all parts of the hand, including the wrist are washed.
- Rinse with running water and dry well.

Using alcohol gel

- Dispense one shot of alcohol gel into your hands and rub together ensuring the gel makes contact with all surfaces of your hands.
- Don't forget the areas between your fingers and under your nails.
- The method is the same as for hand washing.

If your hands are visibly dirty, however, wash with soap and water.

If you are confined to bed or unable to use the hand hygiene facilities during your stay in hospital, please ask the nurse or healthcare assistant who is caring for you for assistance.

A simple way to stay healthy

Hand washing doesn't take much time or effort, but it offers great rewards in terms of preventing infection and illness.

Adopting this simple habit can play a major role in protecting your health and that of others.