

# Hand Hygiene

Patient information leaflet



## How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

At East Coast Community Healthcare (ECCH) we are committed to reducing the risk of infection. Correct hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways of preventing the spread of viruses and bacteria. Even if your hands look clean they can still carry a lot of viruses and bacteria. ECCH requests that staff, visitors and patients all ensure their hands are clean to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Infection prevention and control is important to the wellbeing of our patients and for that reason we have infection prevention and control procedures in place. We ask that you follow the information outlined in this leaflet.

## When should we wash our hands?

### **Patients:**

Please wash your hands using soap and water or use the hand sanitisers provided:

- When entering and leaving the ward.
- After each time you use the toilet, commode or go to the bathroom.
- Before you eat any food.
- Before and after touching your wounds or catheter.

Please ask the staff to clean their hands if you think they have forgotten. They are trained in the importance of hand hygiene and will not mind being reminded. If you feel uncomfortable asking the member of staff, please speak to one of the team providing your care.

### **Visitors:**

Please wash your hands using soap and water or use the hand sanitisers provided.

- When visiting.
- Before touching food, for example, if you are helping a relative/ friend with their meal.
- After using the toilet, changing a nappy or helping your relative to the toilet.
- When leaving.

In some situations hands should be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitisers as these are not suitable for use when dealing with patients who have symptoms of diarrhoea or other infections.

## Staff:

Staff must practice good hand hygiene and be bare below the elbows because they have contact with many different patients. You can expect staff to clean their hands:

- Before undertaking patients care.
- After undertaking patient care.
- After contact with patients surroundings.
- When moving from one patient to another.
- After helping patients to use the toilet, commode or bathroom.
- After using toilet facilities.
- Before serving food and drinks.

In the event of an outbreak of diarrhoea or vomiting please use soap and water as hand sanitiser is not effective.

## How should you clean your hands?

There are various ways of making sure hands are clean. ANY of these will help to remove viruses and bacteria, preventing the spread of infection.

## Soap and Water

If there is access to a basin, wash hands with liquid soap and water. Dry thoroughly with a paper towel.

## Hand Sanitiser

Hand sanitiser is provided for use at the entrance to wards/departments and at the end of each patient's bed. Hand sanitiser should only be used if hands are free from visible dirt.

## ECCH recommends the 7 step hand hygiene technique below



Rub hands palm to palm



Rub back of each hand with the palm of the other



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



Rub with back of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in circular motion



Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using rotational movement



Rub each wrist with opposite hand

For further advice either speak to the nurse looking after you, GP or  
Contact: Infection Prevention and Control Team on 01502 445361

More Information:

NHS Website: [www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/)

## Compliments, concerns or complaints

Tel: 01502 445447

Email: [patientliaison@ecchcic.nhs.uk](mailto:patientliaison@ecchcic.nhs.uk) Or

write to:

PALS, East Coast Community Healthcare,  
Hamilton House, Battery Green Road,  
Lowestoft, NR32 1DE

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