



Sussex Partnership
NHS Foundation Trust

Hand hygiene

Information for patients and visitors

This leaflet explains the different ways to clean your hands and how, by simply washing your hands you can help to reduce the spread of infection.

Good hand hygiene is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of many infections, including those that pose a particular problem in hospitals, such as MRSA (methicillin resistant staphylococcus aureus), C. difficile and Flu (influenza) type illnesses.

Hands may look clean, but the germs that cause infections cannot be seen by the naked eye.

Hand washing

- A good hand washing technique involves wetting the hands under warm running water before applying liquid soap
- The hands should be rubbed together for 15 – 20 seconds so that the soapy water comes into contact with all surfaces of each hand
- It is important to wash under any rings and it is advisable to remove wristwatches before washing
- Hands should be rinsed thoroughly and then dried with paper towels.

For more details on how to wash your hands, [see this step-by-step guide](#).

Using hand sanitiser

- Hands should be free of visible dirt
- Enough hand sanitiser should be used to completely cover all the surfaces of each hand
- The hands should be rubbed together until the solution has evaporated.

Hand sanitiser/ alcohol handrub is a quick, convenient and effective alternative to hand washing, but only if your hands are not visibly dirty.

This is useful when soap and water for hand washing is not readily available.

Washing hands with soap and water is always preferable to using hand sanitiser where possible.

For more details on how to use hand rub, [see this step-by-step guide](#).

Please ask a member of staff for the location of the nearest hand washing facilities or hand sanitiser dispenser.

Our staff should wash their hands regularly, and you are welcome to ask if they have cleaned their hands before they come into contact with you.

Remember to wash your hands at these key times:

- After going to the toilet
- Before touching food and eating
- If they look or feel dirty
- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose
- Before and after handling a medical device such as a urinary catheter
- Before and after visiting patients.

If you would like more information about infection control, or if you have any concerns, please talk to a member of staff who will be happy to speak with you.

Our Infection Prevention and Control team can offer support and advice. Contact the team on 01323 4445152.

If you notice that stocks of soap, paper towels or alcohol hand gel are low, please tell a member of Sussex Partnership staff immediately.

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Patient, Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
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