



TITLE

**HAND HYGIENE**

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**NOTE:** The first appearance of terms in bold in the body of this document (except titles) are defined terms – please refer to the Definitions section.

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## OBJECTIVES

- To outline the required, minimum hand hygiene procedures to be followed within Alberta Health Services (AHS) to prevent the transmission of microorganisms, reduce the incidence of infections and promote the health and safety of **AHS representatives, patients,** and visitors.
- To promote **hand hygiene** as a shared responsibility: AHS representatives, patients, and visitors in an AHS setting will be supported to encourage one another to perform hand hygiene in accordance with the AHS *Hand Hygiene* Policy and this Procedure.

## APPLICABILITY

Compliance with this document is required by all Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

## ELEMENTS

### 1. Point of Emphasis

- 1.1 To prevent the transmission of microorganisms and reduce the incidence of healthcare acquired infections, AHS representatives shall perform hand hygiene in accordance with the four moments for hand hygiene as per the AHS *Hand Hygiene* Policy.

## 2. Hand Hygiene Product Selection

- 2.1 **Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR)** is the Infection Prevention and Control preferred product for performing hand hygiene, except:
- when hands are visibly soiled with food, dirt or blood and body fluids;
  - prior to, during, and after **food handling**;
  - immediately after using the washroom; and
  - when providing care for patients with diarrhea and/or vomiting.
- 2.2 **Plain soap** and water are recommended:
- when hands are visibly soiled with food, dirt or blood and body fluids;
  - following glove removal (doffing) when caring for patients with diarrhea and/or vomiting;
  - prior to and, during, and after food handling; and
  - immediately after using washroom facilities.
- 2.3 Hand cleaning wipes/towelettes can be used for removing visible soil from hands when running water is not available. ABHR shall be used following the use of hand cleaning wipes/towelettes. Hands shall be washed with plain soap once running water is available.
- 2.4 If necessary, tap water can be used for removing visible soil from hands during a boil water advisory. Hand hygiene using ABHR shall be completed following the use of tap water during a boil water advisory.
- 2.5 **Antimicrobial** (also called **antiseptic**) **soap** and water shall be used only before surgical and/or prolonged invasive procedures, and shall not be used for routine hand hygiene. Antimicrobial soap dispenser locations will be determined by AHS representatives, and Infection Prevention and Control based on clinical need.

## 3. Procedure for the Use of Soap and Water

- 3.1 Roll up long sleeves and push up any wrist accessories.
- 3.2 Running water of a comfortable temperature should be used to wet hands and apply enough soap to ensure all hand and wrist surfaces, including palms, areas between fingers, back and sides of hands, fingers, fingertips, thumbs, nails, and under the ring if one is worn, are lathered thoroughly.
- 3.3 Vigorously rub soap over palms and backs of each hand and wrist, finger tips, nail beds, interlocking and interfacing fingers to ensure fingers and thumbs are rubbed to remove visible soil and/or organic material, for 15 to 30 seconds.

- 3.4 Dry hands with disposable paper towel. Use of disposable paper towel is preferred over the use of electric hand dryers in clinical areas.
- 3.5 Use a disposable towel to turn off manual faucets and to open door.
- 3.6 Discard the towel.
- 3.7 Periodically apply AHS-provided hand lotion to assist in maintaining skin integrity.
  - a) AHS-contracted service providers shall provide their respective sites the hand hygiene products that meet the current hand hygiene standards (see Non-Alberta Health Services Documents in the Reference section of this document).

#### 4. Procedure for the Use of ABHR

- 4.1 Ensure hands are dry and not visibly soiled.
- 4.2 Roll up long sleeves and push up any wrist accessories.
- 4.3 Apply a palmful of ABHR product so that all the surfaces of both hands are covered (see the picture below).



- 4.4 Vigorously rub to ensure product is well distributed over all the surfaces of the hands and wrists, palms, between fingers, back of hands, fingers and fingertips, thumbs, nails, and under a ring if one is worn.
- 4.5 Continue rubbing ABHR product over hands until all hand and wrist surfaces are completely dry or 20 to 30 seconds.
- 4.6 Periodically apply AHS-provided hand lotion to assist in maintaining skin integrity.
  - a) AHS-contracted service providers shall provide their respective sites the hand hygiene products that meet the current hand hygiene standards (see Non-Alberta Health Services Documents in the Reference section of this document).

## 5. Assessment of Ability to Perform Hand Hygiene

- 5.1 Circumstances which can affect the ability to perform hand hygiene include wearing of casts, dressings and/or splints, hand sensitivity reactions (e.g., dermatitis) or any other circumstance which interferes with the ability to perform hand hygiene.
- 5.2 Workplace Health and Safety shall be contacted for guidance when an AHS representative is unable to perform hand hygiene or requires assistance with alternate product selection to maintain hand health.

## 6. Storage and Placement of Hand Hygiene Products

- 6.1 Hand hygiene products shall be placed as close as possible to the **point of care**.
- 6.2 Wall-mounted ABHR dispensers shall be installed in consultation with appropriate stakeholders and in accordance with the AHS *ABHR Dispenser Placement Algorithm*. These include, but are not limited to:
- a) point of care;
  - b) nursing stations;
  - c) portable medication carts;
  - d) patient room entrances;
  - e) multi-use computer stations and other multi-use devices;
  - f) entrances to facilities and units; and
  - g) cafeteria entrances.
- 6.3 ABHR dispensers shall be mounted where monitoring is easy to achieve and opportunities for intentional ingestion, vandalism, and theft are minimal. Portable dispensers should be limited to easily monitored areas and personal dispensers should be used where wall-mounted or portable dispensers would compromise patient safety.
- a) ABHR dispenser placement and ABHR storage shall follow the National Fire Code - Alberta Edition as outlined in the *Alcohol Based Hand Rub Dispenser Placement Algorithm*.
- 6.4 To avoid product confusion, wall-mounted ABHR dispensers shall be clearly labelled and installed away from sinks.
- 6.5 In areas where ABHR dispensers cannot be wall-mounted due to the risk of oral ingestion, AHS-provided personal-size ABHR products should be available.

- 6.6 The *Alcohol-based Hand Rub: Product Ingestion Risk Screening Tool* shall be used to help identify individuals at risk of intentional ingestion of ABHR and to inform AHS representatives in the development of a patient specific safety plan.
- a) The *Alcohol-based Hand Rub: Product Ingestion Care Management Guidelines* provides information on what to do when a patient ingests ABHR.
- 6.7 AHS contracted service providers shall provide their respective sites with the hand hygiene products that meet the current hand hygiene standards (see Non-Alberta Health Services Documents in the Reference section of this document).

## DEFINITIONS

**AHS representative** means Alberta Health Services employees, members of the medical and midwifery staffs, students, volunteers, and other persons acting on behalf of Alberta Health Services (including contracted service providers as necessary).

**Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR)** means an AHS-provided liquid, gel or foam formulation containing 60-90% alcohol which is applied to the hands to reduce the number of transient microorganisms.

**Antimicrobial** (also called **antiseptic**) **soap** means a detergent product containing an antiseptic agent at a concentration sufficient to inactivate microorganisms and/or temporarily suppress their growth.

**Food handling** means to supply, sell, offer for sale, process, prepare, package, provide, display, service, dispense, store or transport any food that is intended for public consumption.

**Hand hygiene** means proper practices which remove microorganisms with or without soil from the hands (the application of alcohol-based hand rub or the use of plain/antimicrobial soap and water handwashing).

**Plain soap** means detergent based products whose cleansing activity can be attributed to their detergent properties which remove organic substances from hands. These products have minimal, if any, antimicrobial activity.

**Patient** means an adult or child who receives or has requested health care or services from Alberta Health Services and its health care providers or individuals authorized to act on behalf of Alberta Health Services. This term is inclusive of residents, clients and outpatients.

**Point of care** means, for the purposes of this document, the area or space where patient care is being provided by the staff or medical staff member.

## REFERENCES

- Appendix A: *Appropriate Product Selection for Hand Hygiene*
- Alberta Health Services Governance Documents:
  - *Hand Hygiene Policy* (PS-02)
  - *Medical Staff Rules*

- Alberta Health Services Resources:
  - *Alcohol-based Hand Rub: Product Ingestion Care Management Guidelines*
  - *Alcohol-based Hand Rub: Product Ingestion Risk Screening Tool*
  - *Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR) Dispenser Placement Algorithm*
  - *Alcohol Based Hand Rub Safety Safer Practice Notice*
  - *Environmental Odours and Scents Guideline*
  - *Guidelines for Outbreak Prevention, Control and Management in Acute Care and Facility Living Sites*
  - *Hand Health - Frequently Asked Questions*
  - *Hand Health Guidance Document*
  - *Hand Hygiene and Connect Care Devices Information Sheet*
  - *Hand Hygiene Policy and Procedure – Frequently Asked Questions*
- Non-Alberta Health Services Documents:
  - *Fire Safety and Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Facilities* (STANDATA 2018)
  - *Guidelines for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Facilities* (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002)
  - *Hand Hygiene Position Statement* (Community and Hospital Infection Control Association Canada, 2008)
  - *Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Healthcare* (World Health Organization, 2009)
  - *Required Organizational Practices - Hand Hygiene* (Accreditation Canada)

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## APPENDIX A

## Appropriate Product Selection for Hand Hygiene

<b>Indication:</b> Alcohol Based Hand Rub <u>or</u> Plain Soap and Water	<b>Preferred Product Selection</b>
Before and after direct contact with a patient	Alcohol Based Hand Rub
Before aseptic or clean procedures	Alcohol Based Hand Rub
Before and after touching objects or equipment in the immediate area around the patient	Alcohol Based Hand Rub
When hands are visibly soiled	Plain Soap and Water
After patient care or contact with used equipment in the patient's immediate environment when the patient has diarrhea and/or vomiting	Plain Soap and Water
Prior to, during, and after food handling	Plain Soap and Water