

Hand Hygiene

Information for patients and visitors

Hand hygiene

The purpose of handwashing is to remove dirt, viruses and bacteria from hands to stop these being spread to the environment and from person to person, which can lead to illness. Hand hygiene is a simple, effective procedure which, if carried out correctly, contributes more than any other single factor to the control rates of infection. However it can be forgotten or carried out poorly.

How to wash hands

To be effective, hands should be wet thoroughly with water before applying soap. All surfaces of both hands should then be vigorously massaged with the lather.

Remember to pay special attention to the fingertips, thumbs, between the fingers and underneath rings as these areas are frequently missed.

Right handed people have a tendency to wash the left hand more thoroughly (and vice versa).

Rings

We advise that, with the exception of wedding or commitment rings, patients do not wear jewellery in hospital. However, if you wear a ring it is important that you wash underneath it.

Rinse and dry hands

Make sure you rinse all the soap off your hands under running water and then dry your hands thoroughly on clean paper towels. In some public toilets you will find hand dryers, again ensure your hands are thoroughly dry before you move on.

When to wash hands with water and soap

- Always wash your hands after visiting the toilet.
- Always wash your hands before eating or handling food.
- If your hands are dirty or contaminated with substances, then wash your hands before going to the toilet, as well as afterwards.
- It is good practice for all health care staff to wash their hands or to use alcohol hand rub before contact with a patient and their environment. This includes; dressing wounds, undertaking observations (temperature, pulse and blood pressure monitoring) giving medication or making your bed (to name a few).

Our staff are trained to wash or decontaminate their hands using the correct technique so if you haven't seen the staff member complete these actions it is quite alright to ask them to do so.

When to clean hands with alcohol hand rub

- When entering a ward or department.
- Before contact with patients or their surroundings.
- After contact with patients or their surroundings.

The alcohol hand rub used within the hospital is effective against both bacteria and viruses.

Why do we need to wash our hands?

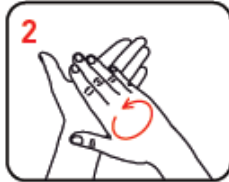
Hands pick up germs (bacteria/viruses) when handling anything, and even though they may appear to be clean, the germs will be there. These germs cannot be seen with the naked eye, but only by using a microscope.

Care of your hands

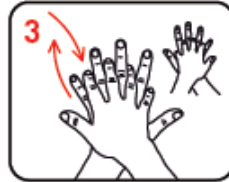
Care of your hands is very important. Always cover any cuts with a waterproof plaster. When you can, apply hand cream as this protects your hands and helps prevent dryness and chapping.

Hand cleaning technique

1. Always wet hands before applying soap.



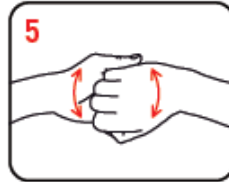
Rub hands palm to palm



Rub back of each hand with the palm of other hand with fingers interlaced



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



Rub with backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlaced



Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using rotational movement



Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion



Rub each wrist with opposite hand

Further information and advice can be obtained from:

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust - Infection Control Team:

Maidstone Hospital

☎ 01622 224037

Tunbridge Wells Hospital

☎ 01892 635679

MTW NHS Trust is committed to making its patient information accessible in a range of languages and formats. If you need this leaflet in another language or format please ask one of your clinical care team or the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). We will do our best to arrange this.

Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust welcomes all forms of feedback from our service users. If the standard of service you have received from the Trust does not meet your expectations, we want to hear from you. Please speak with the ward manager or the nurse in charge in the first instance, or you can contact the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** on:

Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net

or visit their office at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: www.mtw.nhs.uk or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

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