

Hand hygiene

Reducing Health Associated Infections (HAIs) and Multi-resistant Organism (MRO) colonisations among patients is vital for improving patient safety in hospitals. Good hand hygiene practices have been shown to prevent the spread of infectious agents in clinical settings for over 150 years. International evidence agrees that there is no single strategy to reduce HAIs and MRO colonisations, but improving hand hygiene compliance will have a significant impact when combined with other key prevention strategies.

Good hand hygiene means cleaning hands using either alcohol-based hand rub or soap-and-water to help stop the spread of pathogenic organisms.

Goal

Every staff member performs hand hygiene before and after direct patient clinical care or treatment.

Target

One hundred per cent compliance with hand hygiene practices for staff involved in direct patient clinical care or treatment.

Strategies

- Alcohol hand solutions in easy-to-access locations near patient beds, nursing stations, procedural trolleys, diagnostic units, outpatient bays/rooms and treatment rooms.
- Hand hygiene sinks in convenient locations and stocked with liquid soap, antiseptic solutions, alcohol hand solutions, hand moisturiser, and disposable paper towels.
- Hand hygiene champions (role models) in each clinical unit.
- Regular updates on hand hygiene performance and the impact on patient outcomes.
- Feedback on patient experiences.
- Regular in-service programs.

Accountability

A member of the AHS Executive is accountable for ensuring that line management know their responsibilities.

Responsibility is assigned to:

- General Manager of healthcare facility
- Divisional Directors
- Nurse Unit Managers
- all staff
- infection control professionals for collating reports for the General Manager of the healthcare facility.

Measuring progress

- A monthly twenty-minute observational study carried out in each clinical patient area by staff members within that area.
- A six-month measurement of alcohol hand solution usage by Clinical Product Managers.
- Measurement of reduction in HAIs and MRO colonisations.