

**Who can I ask if I have
more questions?**

Infection Prevention and Control
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Hand Hygiene

Information for patients,
families and visitors



WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL
Health care for women | **REVOLUTIONIZED**

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What is hand hygiene?

Hand hygiene, or hand washing, is a process that removes dirt and kills germs that may be on your hands.

Why is hand hygiene important?

Washing your hands is one of the easiest and best ways to stay healthy.

Throughout the day, your healthcare team touches other patients and equipment that could have harmful germs. These germs can then move from person-to-person from the hands of the healthcare provider. **Good hand hygiene stops the spread of germs.**

What is WCH doing to ensure everyone is cleaning their hands?

WCH is committed to your safety. This means we are making sure that all our healthcare providers are washing their hands the right way and at the right times to help keep you safe.

The four moments when healthcare providers should always wash their hands are:

1. Before initial patient/environment contact.
2. Before aseptic procedures.
3. After body fluid exposure risk.
4. After patient/environment contact.

To protect patients, WCH ensures that hand hygiene products are easily available in all patient care areas. There are also hand hygiene reminders placed around the hospital and in washrooms.

How do we track our hand hygiene compliance?

WCH conducts frequent audits to review how often and how well our healthcare providers are washing their hands or using alcohol-based hand rub.

We complete audits by:

Direct Observations

Hand hygiene auditors monitor compliance by directly observing staff's hand hygiene practices.

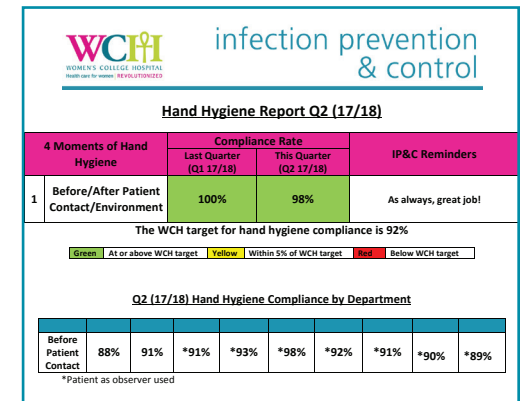
Patients as Observers

Run by WCH volunteers, patients complete survey cards to indicate staff hand hygiene compliance.

Interested in participating?

Ask your healthcare team to see if your clinic is participating in this initiative.

If you are in a patient care area, you may see a poster similar to the one to the right about the hand hygiene compliance of a unit. These posters tell you how well a unit's healthcare team is doing with washing their hands before entering patient rooms and providing care.



What can I use to clean my hands?

There are two ways you can clean your hands:

1. Use soap and running water.
2. Use an alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizer).

Alcohol-based hand rubs are the preferred method for cleaning your hands. However, if your hands are visibly soiled, it is recommended that you wash them with soap and water.

Any person – healthcare provider or patient/visitor – can use the alcohol-based hand rubs found throughout Women's College Hospital (WCH).

I'm just visiting. Why do I need to clean my hands?

By washing your hands, you help keep everyone safe because you stop the spread of germs.

Remember to clean your hands:

- when you arrive at the hospital
- before and after leaving an exam room
- after using the washroom
- before exiting the hospital