

Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings: Basic Expectations for Safe Care

MODULE 2 — Hand Hygiene

Modules in the Slide Series

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7. Sterilization and Disinfection of Patient-Care Items and Devices
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9. Dental Unit Water Quality
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Hand Hygiene Is Key for Prevention

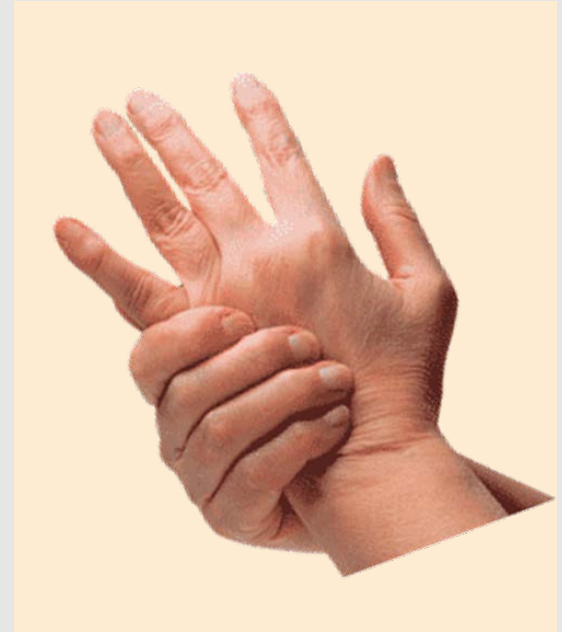
Hand Hygiene

- Is a critical practice for preventing the transmission of pathogens in health care settings.
- Reduces harmful microorganisms on the hands.
- Compliance with hand hygiene practices is routinely used as a clinical performance indicator in hospital settings.
- Is expected by patients to be performed by all dental health care personnel (DHCP).

Why Is Hand Hygiene Important?

Hand Hygiene

- Hands are the most common mode of pathogen transmission.
 - Reduce spread of antimicrobial resistance.
 - Prevent health care-associated infections.



Hand Hygiene

The term “hand hygiene” includes both handwashing with either plain soap or antimicrobial soap and use of alcohol-based hand rubs that do not require the use of water.



Key Recommendations for Hand Hygiene

- Perform hand hygiene:
 - When hands are visibly soiled.
 - After barehanded touching of instruments, equipment, materials, and other objects likely to be contaminated by blood, saliva, or respiratory secretions.
 - Before and after treating each patient, even if gloves are worn.
 - Immediately after removing gloves.
- Use soap and water when hands are visibly soiled (e.g., blood, body fluids). Otherwise, an alcohol-based hand rub may be used.

Hand Hygiene for Routine Dental Procedures

Scenario	Soap and Water	Antimicrobial Soap and Water	Alcohol-Based Hand Rub
If hands are visibly soiled (e.g., dirt, blood, body fluids).	YES	YES	NO
If hands are not visibly soiled.	YES	YES	YES

Hand Hygiene for Surgical Procedures

Scenario	Soap and Water Alone	Antimicrobial Soap and Water	Soap and Water Followed by Alcohol-Based Hand Rub
Surgical hand antisepsis before gloving	NO	YES	YES

Note: soap and alcohol-based hand rubs should have a persistent effect and broad spectrum of activity.

Hand Washing Technique

- Wet hands with water, apply soap, and rub hands together for at least 15 seconds.
- Rinse hands and dry with a disposable towel.
- Use towel to turn off faucet.



Using an Alcohol-Based Hand Rub

- Apply to palm of one hand and rub hands together covering all surfaces until dry.
- Use amount recommended by manufacturer's instructions.
- Do not use if hands are visibly soiled.



Surgical Hand Hygiene

- Antimicrobial soap—scrub hands and forearms for length of time recommended by manufacturer.

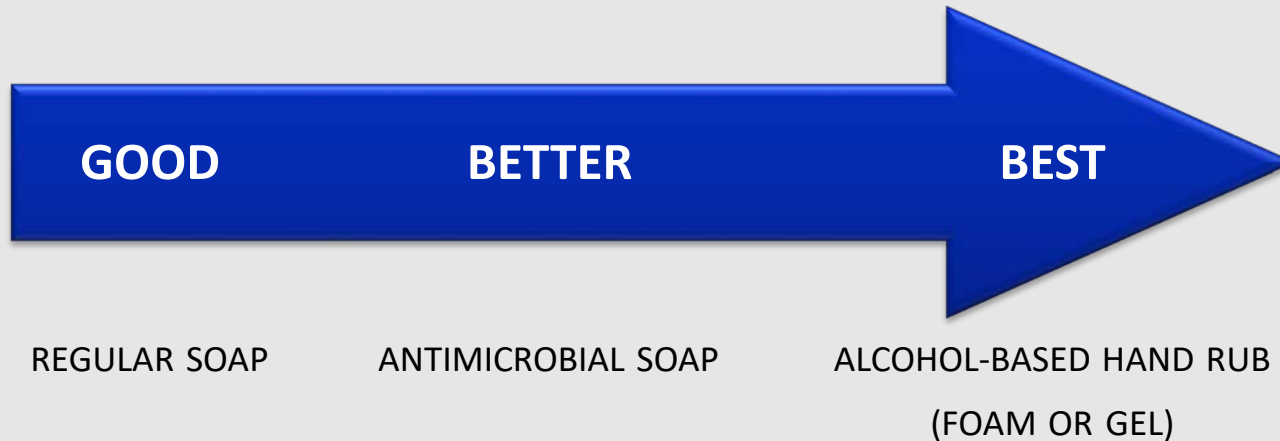
OR

- Alcohol-based hand rub—follow manufacturer's recommendations.
 - Before applying, prewash hands and forearms with nonantimicrobial soap.



Efficacy of Hand Hygiene Preparations in Reducing Bacteria

Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs Are More Effective in Killing Bacteria Than Soap and Water



Alcohol-Based Preparations

Benefits

- Rapid and effective antimicrobial action.
- Improved skin condition.
- More accessible than sinks.

Limitations

- Cannot be used if hands are visibly soiled.
- Must be stored away from high temperatures or flames.
- Hand softeners and glove powders may build up on hands.

Special Hand Hygiene Considerations

- Use hand lotions to prevent skin dryness.
- Consider compatibility of hand care products with gloves (e.g., mineral oils and petroleum bases may cause early glove failure).
- Keep fingernails short.
- Avoid artificial nails.
- Avoid hand jewelry that may tear gloves.

Reminders in the Workplace

- Reminders can be used to prompt DHCP about the importance of hand hygiene.
- Reminders also inform patients about the standard of care they should expect.



Source: Clean Hands Count Promotional Materials

Hand Hygiene Resources

- CDC. *Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings*
- CDC. *Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings—2003*
- CDC. Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings website
 - Hand Hygiene Training Course
 - Clean Hands Count Campaign
- CDC. *Summary of Infection Prevention Practices in Dental Settings: Basic Expectations for Safe Care*

End of Module 2

For more information, contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC.