

## Working together

Your healthcare worker should always perform hand hygiene in front of you. If you did not see them and are worried don't be afraid to ask. We can all play a role in protecting our family and friends by stopping the spread of infection.



## For further information contact:

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Some of the information from this publication has been adopted from [www.hha.org.au](http://www.hha.org.au) (Hand Hygiene Australia) and [www.myhospitals.gov.au](http://www.myhospitals.gov.au)



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Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of Health  
Women and Newborn Health Service

# Hand Hygiene

Information for Patients and Families



 **HealthyWA**  
[healthywa.wa.gov.au](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au)

WNHS  
**Community**  
Advisory Council  
**your voice**

## Why do hand hygiene?

Hand hygiene is the most important factor in reducing infections. Your hands may look clean but germs are invisible and can be easily passed from our hands to others, or our environment.

Fit and healthy people can usually defend themselves against most germs. Healthy, unbroken skin is one of the main defences. Natural defences are often weakened during illness, or after an operation so it's very important to clean your hands - even if they look clean - whenever you visit someone in a healthcare facility.

Healthcare associated infections can result in:

- illness
- a longer stay in hospital
- slower recovery
- additional stress for all concerned



## When should you clean your hands?

'Hand hygiene' means using soap and water or waterless hand rub to clean your hands.

It is important to perform hand hygiene as you enter and leave a healthcare facility and also:

- ✓ after going to the toilet
- ✓ after blowing your nose
- ✓ after smoking
- ✓ after handling/patting animals
- ✓ before, during and after preparing food
- ✓ when your hands are visibly dirty
- ✓ after physical contact

## How to clean your hands



### Using alcohol hand rubs

When hands are visibly clean:

- ✓ remove excess jewellery
- ✓ squirt enough hand rub product to cover both your hands
- ✓ roll to distribute over palms, back of hands and between fingers
- ✓ rub hands together until dry
- ✓ bottles of hand rub should be located in all patient care and high traffic areas.



### Using soap and water

When your hands are visibly dirty:

- ✓ remove excess jewellery
- ✓ wet hands with water
- ✓ apply soap
- ✓ rub all over
- ✓ rinse off with water
- ✓ pat hands dry with paper towel
- ✓ dispose of paper towel in bin.

Hand basins are located throughout the Hospital.