Hand hygiene: when and how

Willowmere Care Home · In-service training IC-02 · For all care, nursing, kitchen and housekeeping staff · Refresher every year · Willowmere Care Home is a made-up care home

Clean hands are the single most effective way to stop infections spreading between residents, and between residents and staff. This in-service covers when to clean your hands, how to do it, and what to wear on your hands and arms at work.

1. Bare below the elbows

- Short sleeves, or sleeves rolled up above the elbow, while giving care.
- No wrist watches, bracelets or rings with stones. One plain band is allowed.
- Nails short and clean. No nail polish, false nails or nail extensions.
- Cover any cut or broken skin with a waterproof dressing.

2. The five moments to clean your hands

1. **Before touching a resident**, for example helping them stand or wash.
2. **Before a clean or aseptic task**, such as giving eye drops or a wound dressing.
3. **After contact with body fluids**, including after taking off gloves.
4. **After touching a resident.**
5. **After touching a resident's surroundings**: the bed, the bedside table, the call bell, the wheelchair.

3. Hand rub or soap and water?

	Alcohol hand rub	Soap and water
When	Hands look clean	Hands are visibly dirty, after using the toilet, before handling food, and when a resident has diarrhoea or vomiting
How long	20–30 seconds, until hands are dry	40–60 seconds, then dry with a paper towel

> When a resident has diarrhoea or vomiting, always use soap and water: alcohol hand rub does not work well against the germs that usually cause it.

4. How to wash

1. Wet your hands, then apply enough soap to cover every surface.
2. Rub palm to palm, then the backs of the hands, then between the fingers.
3. Rub the backs of the fingers, then each thumb, then the fingertips against the palm.
4. Rinse, dry well with a paper towel, and turn the tap off with the towel.

5. Gloves don't replace hand hygiene

- Clean your hands before putting gloves on and straight after taking them off.

- Change gloves between residents, and between a dirty and a clean task for the same resident.
- Never wash or reuse disposable gloves.

6. Look after your skin

Use the hand cream from the staff room at the end of a shift. Tell the unit manager about any soreness or rash: damaged skin carries more germs and is harder to clean.

7. Sign-off

After watching this in-service, sign the training record held by the unit manager. Everyone repeats it once a year.