

Clean Hands Protect Lives

Information for patients, caregivers and families about hand hygiene at Hamilton Health Sciences.



Hand hygiene is crucial for preventing the spread of infections

During your stay at Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS), you play an important role in protecting yourself and your loved ones from germs. Your hands can easily spread germs, so it is important to practice good hand hygiene and clean your hands regularly. Doing so will help keep everyone in our hospital safe from viruses and bacteria that can cause infections.

What is hand hygiene?

In healthcare, the term hand hygiene refers to the practice of washing hands with soap and water or cleaning them with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. In both cases, it is essential to rub your hands thoroughly for at least 15 seconds to ensure all germs are removed.

Why is hand hygiene important?

Keeping your hands clean can stop the spread of germs and protect you, your loved ones and other patients from getting sick. It is one of the easiest and most effective ways to stay healthy.

When should I wash my hands?

- When you are entering and exiting the patient area/room and the hospital
- Before and after touching the patient or their belongings.
- Before and after you help the patient eat, change or use the bathroom
- Before and after eating.
- Before touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- After coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.
- After touching anything dirty like garbage, a bandage or dirty sheets

Where and how can I clean my hands in the hospital?

Alcohol-based hand rub is available at the entrance to all clinical units, in patient rooms and at the nursing desk. Simply use one pump and rub hands all surfaces of your hands for 15 seconds to remove germs. Sinks in all washrooms and patient rooms are supplied with soap and paper towels.

How do I advocate for my safety?

Clean your hands and always feel welcome to ask your health care team to do the same.

