

# Hand Hygiene

A GUIDE FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILIES



This brochure provides information about hand hygiene. It has been designed in response to questions most frequently asked by patients and their families.



آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال، کراچی

The Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi



## What is hand hygiene?

Hand hygiene refers to the removing or killing of germs on the hands. When done correctly, hand hygiene is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infections. Using a soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub can help achieve hand hygiene.

## Why should hand hygiene be performed?

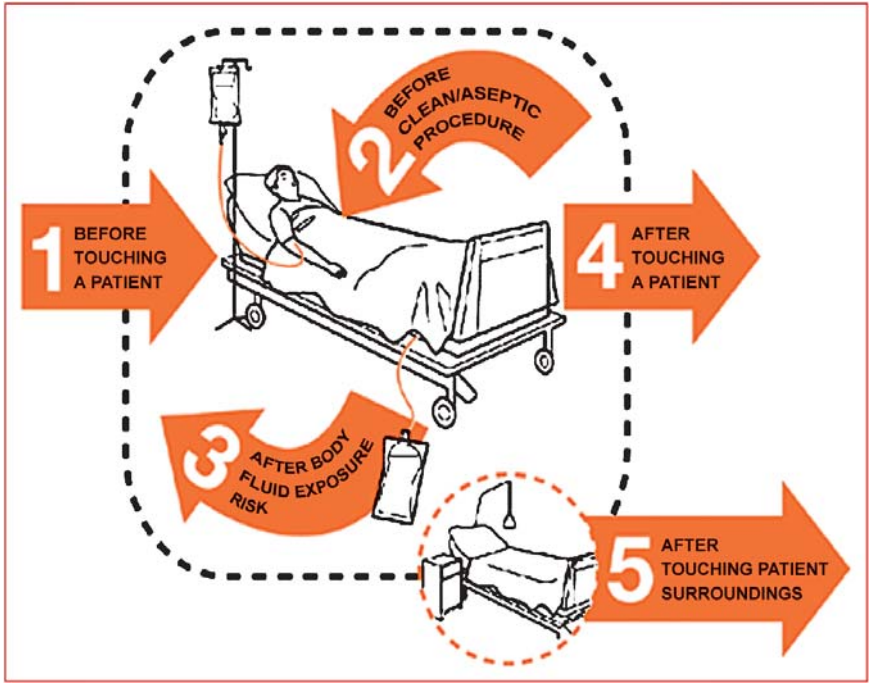
Hand hygiene must be done to prevent infections. Unfortunately, all patients are at risk of getting infections in the hospital which can be life-threatening and difficult to treat.

You can take action by asking people taking care of you to clean their hands.

## When should hand hygiene be performed?

- Before and after caring for someone who is sick (even if gloves were used)
- Before and after preparing and eating food
- Before and after touching your eyes or face
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After using the washroom
- After handling garbage, diapers or cleaning up children who have used washroom facilities
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- When hands are visibly dirty
- After touching hospital surfaces such as bed rails, bedside tables, doorknobs, remote controls or telephones.

***Remember:  
Hand hygiene saves lives.***



## It is your right to have safe care

If you are worried about your healthcare worker having unclean hands before caring for you, you have the right to ask them to clean their hands. This is not always an easy thing to do, and unfortunately some healthcare workers may not respond well to a reminder. If this happens, the healthcare worker should be reported to their supervisor. Sometimes visitors can help remind healthcare workers if patients find it too difficult to do so.

***Remember:  
Ask your doctors, nurses and  
other health workers to  
clean their hands before they  
examine you.***

**For more information, please contact:**

**Infection Control Department**

**Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi**

**Monday-Friday: 7:00 am-5:00 pm**

**Tel: +21 3493 0051, Ext: 1228/1229**

**Reference:**

[http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/PDF/CDC\\_HandHygiene\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/PDF/CDC_HandHygiene_Brochure.pdf)

[http://www.stjoe.on.ca/about/publications/pdf/brochures/hand\\_hygiene\\_patients.pdf](http://www.stjoe.on.ca/about/publications/pdf/brochures/hand_hygiene_patients.pdf)