



*Just Clean Your Hands*

Keeping residents safe and healthy

# Cleaning hands is one of the best ways you and the health care team can prevent infections from spreading

## Did you know that the main way germs can spread is by hands?

Keeping hands clean is the best thing you and the health care team can do to prevent infections from spreading to others in this home.

Thousands of times a day, members of the health team handle things that could have harmful germs. Without good hand cleaning, these germs can spread to residents and cause infection.

A recent study at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Long-Term Care, in Toronto showed that higher hand hygiene compliance rates resulted in lower infection attack rates.



## The health care team cleans their hands often to keep residents safe.

The health care team plays a big role in preventing the spread of infection. They are committed to providing clean, safe care.

There are important moments when the health care team should clean their hands, such as:

- After touching objects in a resident's room and going to another room
- Before and after providing care to residents
- Before and after special procedures, such as giving a needle or eyedrops, or assisting with dental care
- After contact with body fluids, such as blood or urine

To reduce the spread of organisms during shared or group activities, staff, residents, family members and volunteers should clean their hands before beginning and after ending the activity.

## When should the health care team wear gloves?

Wearing gloves does not prevent germs from spreading from resident to resident. So, don't expect the health care team to always wear gloves. But do expect them to clean their hands at the right time and in the right way.

There are times when the health care team should wear gloves. For instance, they wear gloves when they are treating open wounds or taking blood.

They may also wear gloves when taking care of a resident in isolation. These residents need special care and protection. Those visiting a resident in isolation may also have to wear special protection, such as gloves, a mask, or a gown.

Once the health care team is finished with a task, they will throw the gloves away. They clean their hands carefully after using the gloves.

# Preventing infections in long-term care homes is important for resident safety

## Whether you are a resident or a visitor, do your part to prevent germs from spreading.

Think about the times that you would usually clean your hands at home, such as:

- Before and after eating
- After using the washroom
- After sneezing or coughing

Make sure you clean your hands at these times and even more often when you are in a long-term care home.

## There are two ways to clean hands.

You can clean your hands by using:

1. Hand rub provided by the long-term care home
2. Soap and water using the soap in the dispensers at the sink

After cleaning, make sure your hands are dry before you touch anything. This is very important when you use the hand rub.

## Family and friends who do not feel well should not come to visit.

As a resident of a long-term care home, don't be shy about telling visitors to stay home if they are not feeling well. That's another big way we can keep infections from spreading in long-term care homes.

**For more information, please contact [handhygiene@oahpp.ca](mailto:handhygiene@oahpp.ca) or visit [publichealthontario.ca/JCYH](http://publichealthontario.ca/JCYH)**