Handwashing/Hand Hygiene

Policy Statement

This facility considers hand hygiene the primary means to prevent the spread of infections.

Policy Interpretation and Implementation

1. All personnel shall be trained and regularly in-serviced on the importance of hand hygiene in preventing the transmission of healthcare-associated infections.

2. All personnel shall follow the handwashing/hand hygiene procedures to help prevent the spread of infections to other personnel, residents, and visitors.

3. Hand hygiene products and supplies (sinks, soap, towels, alcohol-based hand rub, etc.) shall be readily accessible and convenient for staff use to encourage compliance with hand hygiene policies.

4. Triclosan-containing soaps will not be used.

5. Residents, family members and/or visitors will be encouraged to practice hand hygiene through the use of fact sheets, pamphlets and/or other written materials provided at the time of admission and/or posted throughout the facility.

6. Wash hands with soap (antimicrobial or non-antimicrobial) and water for the following situations:
   a. When hands are visibly soiled; and
   b. After contact with a resident with infectious diarrhea including, but not limited to infections caused by norovirus, salmonella, shigella and C. difficile.

7. Use an alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 62% alcohol; or, alternatively, soap (antimicrobial or non-antimicrobial) and water for the following situations:
   a. Before and after coming on duty;
   b. Before and after direct contact with residents;
   c. Before preparing or handling medications;
   d. Before performing any non-surgical invasive procedures;
   e. Before and after handling an invasive device (e.g., urinary catheters, IV access sites);
   f. Before donning sterile gloves;
   g. Before handling clean or soiled dressings, gauze pads, etc.;
   h. Before moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during resident care;
   i. After contact with a resident’s intact skin;
   j. After contact with blood or bodily fluids;
   k. After handling used dressings, contaminated equipment, etc.;
   l. After contact with objects (e.g., medical equipment) in the immediate vicinity of the resident;
   m. After removing gloves;
   n. Before and after entering isolation precaution settings;
   o. Before and after eating or handling food;
   p. Before and after assisting a resident with meals; and
   q. After personal use of the toilet or conducting your personal hygiene.

8. Hand hygiene is the final step after removing and disposing of personal protective equipment.

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9. The use of gloves does not replace hand washing/hand hygiene. Integration of glove use along with routine hand hygiene is recognized as the best practice for preventing healthcare-associated infections.

10. Single-use disposable gloves should be used:
   a. Before aseptic procedures;
   b. When anticipating contact with blood or body fluids; and
   c. When in contact with a resident, or the equipment or environment of a resident, who is on contact precautions.

11. Wearing artificial fingernails is strongly discouraged among staff members with direct resident-care responsibilities, and is prohibited among those caring for severely ill or immunocompromised residents. The Infection Preventionist maintains the right to request the removal of artificial fingernails at any time if he or she determines that they present an unusual infection control risk.

**Procedure**

**Equipment and Supplies**

1. The following equipment and supplies are necessary for hand hygiene;
   a. Alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 62% alcohol;
   b. Running water;
   c. Soap (liquid or bar; anti-microbial or non-antimicrobial);
   d. Paper towels;
   e. Trash can;
   f. Lotion; and
   g. Non-sterile gloves.

**Washing Hands**

1. Vigorously lather hands with soap and rub them together, creating friction to all surfaces, for a minimum of 20 seconds (or longer) under a moderate stream of running water, at a comfortable temperature. Hot water is unnecessarily rough on hands.

2. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water. Hold hands lower than wrists. Do not touch fingertips to inside of sink.

3. Dry hands thoroughly with paper towels and then turn off faucets with a clean, dry paper towel.

4. Discard towels into trash.

5. Use lotions throughout the day to protect the integrity of the skin.

**Using Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs**

1. Apply generous amount of product to palm of hand and rub hands together.

2. Cover all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

3. Follow manufacturers’ directions for volume of product to use.

**Applying and Removing Gloves**

1. Perform hand hygiene before applying non-sterile gloves.
2. When applying, remove one glove from the dispensing box at a time, touching only the top of the cuff.
3. When removing gloves, pinch the glove at the wrist and peel away from the hand, turning the glove inside out.
4. Hold the removed glove in the gloved hand and remove the other glove by rolling it down the hand and folding it into the first glove.
5. Perform hand hygiene.

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<td><strong>OBRA Regulatory Reference Numbers</strong></td>
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<td>483.65(b); 483.65(b)(3)</td>
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