



FlexiLearnHub

Knowledge Hub

Professional Resources for Care, Catering & Hospitality

FREE PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE

Hand Hygiene Best Practice Checklist

A Professional Awareness Guide for Care Staff

Knowledge Hub Resource 023

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Part of the FlexiLearnHub Professional Knowledge Lib

About This Resource

Purpose

Good hand hygiene is one of the simplest and most effective ways to help reduce the spread of harmful microorganisms in health and social care settings. By cleaning hands correctly and at the appropriate times, care staff can help protect the people they support, their colleagues and themselves from avoidable infections.

This professional awareness guide has been developed to reinforce the importance of effective hand hygiene and everyday infection prevention practices. It provides practical reminders to help care staff recognise when hand hygiene should be performed and encourages consistent good practice throughout the working day.

The information within this resource is intended to support professional awareness and should always be used alongside your organisation's infection prevention and control policies, local procedures and current national guidance.

Suitable For

This resource is suitable for:

- Residential Care Homes
 - Nursing Homes
 - Dementia Care Services
 - Supported Living Services
 - Home Care Providers
 - Healthcare Assistants
 - Senior Care Assistants
 - Team Leaders and Supervisors
 - New Care Staff as part of induction
 - Anyone providing direct care and support
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Learning Objectives

After reading this guide, learners should be able to:

- Understand why effective hand hygiene is essential in preventing the spread of infection.
 - Recognise common situations where hand hygiene should always be performed.
 - Identify good everyday hand hygiene practices in care settings.
 - Appreciate the importance of following organisational infection prevention and control procedures.
 - Understand how effective hand hygiene contributes to safer, person-centred care.
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Important Information

This resource has been produced for **professional awareness purposes** and should be used alongside your employer's infection prevention and control policies, procedures and training.

It does **not** replace practical training, organisational policies, competency assessments or professional judgement.

Always:

- Follow your employer's infection prevention and control policies.
- Perform hand hygiene at the appropriate times.
- Use approved hand hygiene products in accordance with local procedures.
- Report concerns regarding infection risks promptly.
- Work within your level of training and competence.

Effective hand hygiene is a simple action that plays a vital role in protecting individuals, colleagues and visitors while helping to reduce the spread of infection in care settings.

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When and Why Hand Hygiene Matters

Our hands can easily pick up and transfer harmful microorganisms during everyday care activities. Effective hand hygiene helps reduce the risk of cross-contamination and plays an essential role in protecting individuals, colleagues and visitors from avoidable infections.

Cleaning your hands at the right time is just as important as cleaning them correctly.

✓ Before Providing Care

Always remember to clean your hands:

- ☐ Before having direct contact with an individual.
 - ☐ Before assisting with personal care.
 - ☐ Before supporting someone with eating or drinking.
 - ☐ Before handling food, drinks or medication, where required by your organisation's procedures.
 - ☐ Before putting on disposable gloves.
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✓ After Providing Care

Clean your hands immediately after:

- ☐ Providing personal care.
 - ☐ Assisting with mobility or moving and handling tasks.
 - ☐ Removing disposable gloves.
 - ☐ Coming into contact with body fluids or contaminated items, in accordance with your organisation's procedures.
 - ☐ Completing care activities before moving on to another task.
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✓ Throughout the Working Day

Good hand hygiene should also be carried out:

- ☐ After using the toilet.
 - ☐ Before eating or drinking.
 - ☐ After coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose.
 - ☐ After handling waste or soiled items.
 - ☐ Whenever your hands are visibly dirty or you believe they may have become contaminated.
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✓ Protecting Everyone

Good hand hygiene helps to:

- ✓ Reduce the spread of harmful microorganisms.
 - ✓ Protect vulnerable individuals receiving care.
 - ✓ Protect colleagues and visitors.
 - ✓ Promote safer care environments.
 - ✓ Support effective infection prevention and control.
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Professional Reminder

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective and simplest ways to help prevent the spread of infection. By cleaning your hands at the appropriate times and following your organisation's infection prevention and control procedures, you help create a safer environment for everyone.

Hand Hygiene Best Practice Checklist

Consistently following good hand hygiene practices helps reduce the spread of infection and supports a safe, clean and professional care environment. Use this checklist as a reminder during your daily work.

✓ Before Cleaning Your Hands

Remember to:

- ☐ Remove hand and wrist jewellery where required by your organisation's policy.
 - ☐ Ensure sleeves do not interfere with effective hand hygiene.
 - ☐ Cover any cuts or broken skin with an appropriate waterproof dressing.
 - ☐ Check that hand hygiene facilities are clean and well stocked.
 - ☐ Follow your employer's infection prevention and control procedures at all times.
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✓ Good Everyday Practice

Help maintain high standards by:

- ☐ Cleaning your hands at the appropriate times throughout your shift.
 - ☐ Using the approved hand hygiene products provided by your organisation.
 - ☐ Paying attention to all areas of the hands, including between the fingers, fingertips, thumbs and wrists.
 - ☐ Ensuring hands are completely dry before continuing with care activities, where appropriate.
 - ☐ Maintaining good personal hygiene throughout the working day.
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✓ Using Disposable Gloves

Remember that gloves do **not** replace effective hand hygiene.

Always:

- ☐ Perform hand hygiene before putting on disposable gloves where required by local procedures.
 - ☐ Change gloves between care tasks and between individuals.
 - ☐ Remove gloves safely after use.
 - ☐ Perform hand hygiene after removing disposable gloves.
 - ☐ Dispose of used gloves in accordance with your organisation's waste management procedures.
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✓ Protecting the People You Support

Good hand hygiene helps to:

- ✓ Reduce the risk of cross-contamination.
 - ✓ Protect vulnerable individuals from avoidable infections.
 - ✓ Maintain a clean and safe care environment.
 - ✓ Support effective infection prevention and control practices.
 - ✓ Demonstrate professionalism and high standards of care.
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Professional Reminder

Hand hygiene is one of the most important everyday responsibilities in health and social care. By following good hand hygiene practices consistently and at the appropriate times, every member of the care team contributes to safer care, improved infection prevention and better outcomes for the people they support.

Common Hand Hygiene Mistakes to Avoid

Even experienced care staff can develop habits that reduce the effectiveness of hand hygiene. Being aware of these common mistakes helps maintain high standards of infection prevention and control and protects everyone within the care environment.

✓ Avoid Missing Opportunities

Remember to:

- ☐ Never assume your hands are clean simply because they look clean.
 - ☐ Do not forget to clean your hands between different care activities where required.
 - ☐ Avoid moving directly from one individual to another without performing appropriate hand hygiene.
 - ☐ Never overlook hand hygiene because you are busy or under pressure.
 - ☐ Always follow your organisation's infection prevention and control procedures.
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✓ Disposable Gloves Are Not a Substitute

Disposable gloves provide an additional protective barrier but do **not** replace effective hand hygiene.

Remember:

- ☐ Clean your hands before putting on gloves where required by local procedures.
 - ☐ Remove gloves immediately after completing the task.
 - ☐ Never wear the same pair of gloves when supporting different individuals.
 - ☐ Perform hand hygiene after removing gloves.
 - ☐ Dispose of gloves safely in accordance with your organisation's procedures.
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✓ Protect Your Hands

Healthy skin supports effective hand hygiene.

Help protect your hands by:

- ☐ Reporting skin irritation or concerns to your manager.
 - ☐ Using approved hand care products where provided.
 - ☐ Keeping fingernails clean and well maintained in accordance with your employer's policy.
 - ☐ Avoiding anything that may prevent effective hand hygiene, such as jewellery or accessories where prohibited.
 - ☐ Following your organisation's dress code and infection prevention policies.
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✓ Good Habits Make a Difference

Simple daily habits help reduce the spread of infection.

Remember to:

- ✓ Make hand hygiene part of every care routine.
 - ✓ Encourage good infection prevention practices within your team.
 - ✓ Lead by example and maintain professional standards.
 - ✓ Continue to refresh your knowledge through regular training.
 - ✓ Support a positive culture of safety and infection prevention.
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Professional Reminder

Effective hand hygiene is one of the simplest actions you can take to help protect the people you support, your colleagues and yourself. By avoiding common mistakes and following good everyday practices, every member of the care team contributes to a safer, cleaner and healthier care environment.

Good Practice Reminders

Effective hand hygiene is one of the simplest and most important ways to help reduce the spread of infection in health and social care settings. By following good hand hygiene practices consistently, care staff help protect the people they support, their colleagues, visitors and themselves.

Every member of the care team has a responsibility to maintain high standards of infection prevention and control throughout every working day.

Professional Standards Checklist

Always remember to:

- ✓ Follow your employer's infection prevention and control policies and procedures.
 - ✓ Perform hand hygiene at the appropriate times throughout your shift.
 - ✓ Use approved hand hygiene products provided by your organisation.
 - ✓ Follow local guidance when using disposable gloves and personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - ✓ Report shortages of hand hygiene supplies or concerns about infection risks promptly.
 - ✓ Maintain good personal hygiene and professional standards at all times.
 - ✓ Record and report concerns in accordance with organisational procedures.
 - ✓ Work within your level of training and competence.
 - ✓ Continue to refresh your knowledge through regular infection prevention training.
 - ✓ Help promote a positive culture of safety, cleanliness and professionalism.
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Remember

Good hand hygiene is a simple habit that makes a significant difference.

By cleaning your hands at the right time and following good infection prevention practices, you help reduce the spread of infection and contribute to safer, high-quality, person-centred care.

Every clean pair of hands helps protect someone.

Key Messages

Clean Hands Save Lives

Good hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of infection.

Be Consistent

Clean your hands at the appropriate times throughout every shift.

Follow Good Practice

Always follow your employer's infection prevention and control policies and procedures.

Protect Everyone

Effective hand hygiene helps safeguard individuals receiving care, colleagues, visitors and the wider community.

Final Reminder

This guide provides general professional awareness information only.

It should always be used alongside:

- Your employer's infection prevention and control policies and procedures.
- Current national guidance and local protocols.
- Practical infection prevention and control training.
- Organisational risk assessments.
- Professional judgement and best practice.

Every care setting is different. Always follow your employer's procedures and provide care that is safe, person-centred and appropriate to the individual's assessed needs.

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Information within this guide is intended as general awareness and should always be used alongside current legislation, organisational policies, professional guidance and individual care plans where applicable.
