



# HAND HYGIENE FOR VISITORS AND PATIENTS



**LADY POHAMBA**  
private hospital

## **WHY DO HAND HYGIENE?**

When we are fit and healthy we can usually defend ourselves against many germs. Having healthy intact skin is one of the main ways we can do this. Often our natural defenses are weakened when we are not well or after an operation.

It's very important that each time you visit someone in a healthcare facility you clean your hands, even if your hands look clean.

Healthcare associated infections can result in:

- Illness;
- A longer stay in hospital;
- Slower recovery; and
- Additional stress for all concerned

## **HOW DO WE DO THAT?**

Working together...

- Your healthcare worker should always perform hand hygiene in front of you.
- Please remind them if the procedure is not happening.
- We can all play a major role in stopping the spread of infections to our family and friends by washing washing hands.
- Hand hygiene is the single most important factor in reducing hospital acquired infections. Hands may look clean, but many germs are invisible to our eyes.
- We can unknowingly transmit germs on our hands to others and our environment.

## **WHEN SHOULD YOU CLEAN YOUR HANDS?**

- Hand hygiene is a general term referring to the use of soap & water or a waterless hand rub to cleanse your hands.
- It is important to perform hand hygiene as you enter and leave a healthcare facility and also:
  - After going to the toilet
  - After blowing your nose
  - After smoking
  - After handling/petting animals
  - Before, during & after preparing food
  - When your hands are visually dirty

## **USING SOAP AND WATER**

When hands are visibly dirty:

- Remove access jewelry;
- Wet hands with water;
- Apply soap;
- Rub all over;
- Rinse off with water;
- Pat hands dry with paper towel; and
- Dispose of paper towel in bin.

## **USING ALCOHOL HAND RUBS**

When hands are visibly clean:

- Remove access jewelry;
- Squirt enough hand rub products to cover both your hands;
- Roll to distribute over palms, back of hands & between fingers; and rub hands together until dry.

## **REFERENCE:**

Hand Hygiene Australia [www.hha.org.au](http://www.hha.org.au)