

Clean your hands video: transcript

[This is a transcript of the voiceover in the Clean Your Hands video, available as an online learning object at

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nursing/sonet/rlos/placs/cleanyourhands/>]

Germes are everywhere. Many of them are important in helping us to keep healthy. However, some germs can cause infections and it is important to prevent these from spreading and causing harm.

Your hands may look clean but in reality they are covered in germs. Simply touching unclean surfaces will spread germs to you and then to everything else you touch.

The most effective way of preventing the spread of germs is by cleaning your hands thoroughly either by handwashing with soap and warm water or using an alcohol hand application commonly found throughout hospitals.

An alcohol based hand rub is a good alternative to handwashing when hands are not visibly dirty. However although alcohol has the ability to kill germs such as MRSA, it has little effect against other serious bacteria such as *Clostridium Difficile*.

Healthcare workers, patients and visitors all have a role to play in minimising the spread of bacteria and other germs. Recognising the times when hand hygiene is required is crucially important.

Staff who will be looking after you should clean their hands:

- **Before touching a patient** - this will protect you against harmful germs that may be carried on their hands.
- **Before an aseptic technique such as a wound dressing** - this will protect you from harmful germs, which may include your own germs, from entering your body.
- **After exposure to body fluids, after patient contact and after contact with patient surroundings** - this will protect staff and the healthcare environment from harmful germs.

Patients and visitors are encouraged to help prevent infection by asking staff if they have cleaned their hands.

Patients and visitors can also play an important role in helping reduce the spread of germs by using effective hand hygiene:

- **After going to the toilet** - this will protect yourself and others from germs present in the healthcare environment.
- **Before eating or drinking** - this protects you from germs that you carry on your hands, which can then enter your mouth.
- **Before and after moving around the ward** - this protects other patients, staff and the healthcare environment from harmful germs.

Using an effective handwashing technique is the best way of killing bacteria on your hands:

1. First wet your hands before applying any soap, water alone is ineffective for cleaning skin so to remove germs from your hands the application of soaps or detergents is necessary.
2. The hands should be rubbed together vigorously for a minimum of 15 seconds, ensuring every surface of the hands and wrists is cleaned. The areas between fingers are often neglected so interleave the fingers and rub together.
3. Clean the thumb by holding it in one hand whilst rotating it in the palm of the other rubbing the soap into the thumb.
4. Another area often missed is the finger tips. Clean the fingertips by clasp the left hand into the right whilst rubbing the fingertips together.
5. Complete the process with a thorough rinse and dry.

In using this technique the visitor is helping reduce the spread of germs such as *Clostridium Difficile*.

By following these simple guidelines we can all help to stop the spread of harmful germs and prevent the need to stay in hospital any longer than is necessary.

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