

Hand Hygiene at UHN



UHN

Department of Infection Prevention and Control

Information for Patients and Families



What is hand hygiene [hahy-jeen]?

Hand hygiene (or hand washing) removes the visible soil and kills germs that may be on your hands. Good hand hygiene can be done in 2 ways:

1. Using an alcohol-based hand rub
2. Using soap and running water

Sometimes, patients get infections while in hospital. These are called hospital-acquired infections (HAI's). Thousands of times a day, your healthcare team has contact with patients and with pieces of equipment that could have harmful germs. These germs can then move from patient to patient on the hands of the healthcare worker; this is why good hand hygiene is so important.

UHN is committed to patient safety. This means that we are making sure that all our healthcare workers are washing their hands the right way and practicing the “4 moments for hand hygiene” to help keep you safe.

The 4 best times when healthcare workers should wash their hands are:

1. Before entering a patient's room and caring for the patient
2. Before all patient procedures
3. After having contact with any body fluids
4. After all patient care and when leaving the patient's room

This information is to be used for informational purposes only and is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Please consult your health care provider for advice about a specific medical condition. A single copy of these materials may be reprinted for non-commercial personal use only.

© 2010 University Health Network. All rights reserved.

Author: Infection Prevention and Control

Created: 06/2010

Form: D-5696



University Health Network
Toronto General Hospital Toronto Western Hospital Princess Margaret Hospital

Did you know that UHN reports hand hygiene information to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)?

Every year UHN and all hospitals across Ontario must report information about their hand hygiene practices to the Ministry of Health. Some of the information we send includes:

- The number of times hand hygiene was done by all our healthcare providers
- The percentage of compliance by combined categories of healthcare providers

What information is UHN posting on their website about hand hygiene?

UHN and all Ontario hospitals, including acute care, rehabilitation, complex continuing care, mental health and addiction facilities, are now required to publicly report their hand hygiene information by hospital site.

UHN is now posting information for you about how well all our healthcare workers are performing:

- Hand hygiene before entering a patient's room and caring for the patient
- Hand hygiene after patient care and when leaving the patient's room

You can find this information on the UHN website at:

http://www.uhn.ca/Patients_&Visitors/accountability/HH.asp

What is UHN doing to make sure everyone is practicing good hand hygiene?

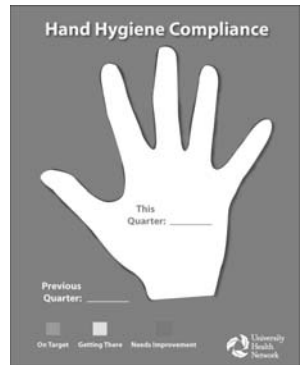
UHN has a full-time employee who measures how often and how well hand hygiene is being done by our healthcare workers across our 3 hospital sites.

UHN also:

- Posts how well we are doing with hand hygiene every 3 months
- Raises awareness of the importance of hand hygiene
- Reviews hand hygiene rates with all patient care units
- Makes sure that hand hygiene products are readily available for healthcare providers and patients in all patient care areas
- Holds education sessions for UHN staff about hand hygiene practices and products
- Works with all our healthcare providers to improve hand hygiene practices

**There is a poster on my unit that talks about hand hygiene.
What does this mean to me?**

At UHN, we want patients to know how we are doing with hand hygiene and to feel comfortable talking about hand hygiene with their healthcare providers. On your floor, you will see a poster about the hand hygiene practices on that unit.



These posters:

- Tell you how well your unit’s healthcare team is doing washing their hands before entering a patient’s room and providing care for the patient
- Tell you how well your unit’s healthcare team did this month and last month

If you have any questions about these posters or about UHN’s commitment to practicing good hand hygiene, please talk to any member of your healthcare team.

Where can I get more information about hand hygiene?

Please feel free to talk to any member of your UHN healthcare team about our hand hygiene program.

As well, here are some websites that you may find helpful:

➤ **World Health Organization (WHO)**

“Save Lives: Clean Your Hands”

www.who.int/gpsc/5may/en/

➤ **Ministry of Health and Long-Term care (MOHLTC)**

“Just Clean Your Hands”

www.health.gov.on.ca/patient_safety/public/ps_pub.html

➤ **Ontario Hospital Association (OHA)**

“Clean Hands, Protect Lives”

www.oha.com/patientsafetytips

➤ **Toronto Public Health (TPH)**

Hand washing video for children grades 4-6

www.toronto.ca/health/cdc/clean_hands/index.htm

➤ **UHN Infection Prevention and Control**

“How to protect yourself, your family and friends from hospital-acquired infections (HAIs)”

[www.uhn.ca/Patients & Visitors/health info/topics/i/infectionprevention.asp](http://www.uhn.ca/Patients%20&%20Visitors/health_info/topics/i/infectionprevention.asp)

Adapted from Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) “Clean Hands, Protect Lives” at www.oha.com/patientsafetytips