

Sometimes staff can forget and they **will not feel offended** if you remind them. Sometimes they may have washed their hands at a sink out of your sight, so asking them will reassure you they have washed their hands.

If you do not have facilities to wash your hands, **please ask the staff**. You may be bed-bound and need to wash your hands after using the toilet or before a meal. The staff will be very happy to supply facilities for you, such as hand wipes, a bowl of water, paper towels and soap.

The human costs of hospital acquired infection can be:

- Pain and scarring
- Extended stay away from family
- Working days lost
- Family income loss
- Financial strain – increased visiting etc
- Increased morbidity
- Increased mortality

If, after reading this leaflet you have any further questions, please contact your doctor or discharge ward on:

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road,
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR
Telephone: 0151 426 1600



Hand Decontamination

This leaflet can be made available
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona
w innych językach/formatkach.

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This leaflet aims to explain the importance of hand washing within the hospital environment, both for you as a patient and for the staff caring for you.

Hand-washing is the single most important procedure for preventing hospital acquired infections.

Germs that may be harmless in one body site, for example, the hands, can cause serious infection at another site, such as wounds and devices that need to go into the body.

The facts

- 9% of patients acquire infections in hospital
- A third of these cases can be prevented by complying with basic infection control procedures
- Inadequate patient/staff hand hygiene contributes to the spread of hospital acquired infection
- Good hand hygiene by patients and staff can help prevent the risks of cross contamination

When should patients wash their hands?

There is no set frequency for hand-washing, it is determined by the actions you have just done or are about to do. Here are some examples of when hand-washing should take place:

- Before preparing or handling food
- After visiting the toilet
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- Before handling your medicines

If you need assistance with cleaning your hands, please ask the staff caring for you.

When should staff wash their hands?

In the same situations as patients, plus:

- Before touching any patient
- Before contact with any vulnerable site on a patient e.g. drip or wound
- Before wearing sterile gloves
- Before giving medicines
- After any possible contact with germs
- After any direct patient care e.g. bathing, assisting to move, toileting
- Before leaving an isolation ward
- Before and after emptying catheter bags
- Before and after starting work
- After handling dirty linen or waste

Hand Sanitiser/Rubs

The staff caring for you can use an hand sanitiser instead of soap and water, when their hands are not visibly dirty. This is quick, easy and just as effective as washing with soap and water. You may see the doctors and nurses using this frequently when going from one patient to another, particularly on ward rounds.

Some useful advice

All staff working in clinical areas of this Trust are required to be 'bare below the elbow' (i.e. short sleeves, no watches or jewellery other than one plain banded ring) to make it easier for them to clean their hands properly. **Do not be shy** to ask any of our staff, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, etc. to be bare below the elbow and if they have washed their hands before they touch you.