

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 01/04  
**REVISED DATE:**

**REVIEW DATE:** 01/07

---

**WISHARD HEALTH SERVICES POLICY**

---

**DEPARTMENT:** Hospital Administration

**POLICY NO:** 950-144

**TITLE:** Hand Hygiene

**SUBJECT:** Infection Control

---

**PURPOSE**

To reduce the incidence of health care associated infections, as hand hygiene is the single most important way to prevent spread of infection.

**POLICY**

Hand hygiene with soap and water is indicated when hands are visibly soiled or contaminated with a moist body substance. If hands are not visibly soiled, use of a waterless alcohol-based antiseptic agent to routinely degerm hands is acceptable. (Since alcohol has poor activity against bacterial spores, soap and water hand washing is advocated for patients with clostridium difficile.)

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/PROCEDURES**

Hands must be washed or degermed:

- Before direct patient contact;
- Before donning sterile gloves;
- After removing gloves;
- After direct patient contact and after contact with any moist body substance, mucous membrane, non-intact skin and/or equipment or items that are likely to be contaminated with same and when visibly soiled; and
- Before and after eating and/or using a restroom, after coughing and/or sneezing.

The proper technique for soap and water hand washing is:

- Wet hands with running water;
- Apply hand washing agent and vigorously rub hands together for 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers; and
- Rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly with disposable towels; use towel to turn off faucet. Avoid using hot water to reduce skin irritation.

The proper technique for waterless alcohol-based agents is:

- Apply alcohol-based hand antiseptic product to palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until hands are dry.

Staff who have direct patient contact shall not wear artificial fingernails or nail tips and shall keep natural nail tips less than ¼ inch long.

Use hand lotion that is compatible with the antimicrobial products as well as glove material, which is provided in dispensers to prevent skin irritation.

**NOTE:** Hand hygiene products can become contaminated and support the growth of some microorganisms. Products shall be stored in closed containers and dispensed from either a disposable container that is discarded when empty or containers that are washed thoroughly before refilling.

---

**DEPARTMENT:** Hospital Administration

**SUBJECT:** Infection Control

---

**Signature Page for Policy Number: 950-144**

---

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Helen Volk, R.N., B.S., C.I.C.  
Director, Infection Control

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**CONCURRENCES:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Crissy Lough, R.N., B.S.N.  
Risk Manager

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly Harper, R.N., M.S.  
Vice President, Community & Public Relations  
Interim Chief Nursing Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sylvia Wilcox  
Chief Counsel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPROVAL:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa E. Harris, M.D.  
Chief Executive Officer & Medical Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**DISTRIBUTED BY:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheryll Wodniak, R.N., M.S.N.  
Director, Quality Management

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date