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# Hand Hygiene Policy

This policy and related procedures are based on Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare Associated Infection (ARHAI) (Scotland) within NHS National Services Scotland (NHS NSS) Standard Infection Control Precautions ([National Infection Prevention and Control Manual),](https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/) which includes step-by-step illustrated guides for each hand hygiene technique. [Consider appending the [step by step guides](https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/appendices/) to this policy and procedures document]

The [Name] Dental practice recognises that hand hygiene is crucial in reducing the spread of infection. All staff receive hand hygiene training as part of the induction process and subsequently as required. Records of training are kept. All staff in the practice involved in clinical or decontamination activity undertake appropriate and adequate hand hygiene by following the Practice’s written procedures and encourage others delivering care to do the same. The Practice provides the following facilities for effective hand hygiene [include all items and their location]:

* Sink(s) dedicated to hand washing only are located in [e.g. every surgery and the LDU];
* Dedicated hand washing sinks are fitted with taps that are operated [e.g. using elbows or wrists/automatically];
* Hand hygiene products meet BS EN standards and are available in wall mounted dispensers located. [e.g. next to every hand washing only sink or areas where clinical activity is undertaken];
* Soft, disposable hand towels for hand drying are available and are located [e.g. in dispensers at each sink];
* Hands-free, pedal-operated, waste receptacles for the disposal of towels are located in [e.g. every surgery].
* [list any other hand hygiene facilities the practice has]

## Hand Hygiene Procedures

* Wear work clothing with short sleeves i.e., bare below the elbows
* Always use the sink(s) dedicated to hand washing only
* Operate the taps [using elbows or wrists/without touching (if automated)]

### Before performing hand hygiene

* Expose forearms
* Remove wrist and hand jewellery, including wrist watches, before working in the clinical environment or the decontamination area.
* A plain metal finger ring is permitted but this must be removed or moved when performing hand hygiene to ensure the area under the ring is cleaned and dried thoroughly.
* Keep nails short and clean. Do not wear artificial nails, nail extensions or nail products if working in the clinical environment or decontamination areas.
* Cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing.

Situations when hand hygiene (either washing with non-antimicrobial liquid soap and water, or use of a hand rub) is performed include:

* At the beginning of each session;
* Before putting on gloves;
* After removing gloves;
* Before touching a patient;
* After each treatment episode and before any other activity;
* At the end of each session.
* [add other situations]
* Assess the situation to determine the choice of hand hygiene method, as detailed below.

### Hand washing using non-antimicrobial liquid soap and water

Used:

* following visits to the toilet;
* after blowing/wiping/touching nose;
* before eating, drinking and food preparation;
* when hands are visibly dirty or soiled;
* when exposure to spore forming organisms such as Clostridium difficile or a gastro-intestinal infection (e.g. norovirus) is suspected/proven.
* Wash hands thoroughly using non-antimicrobial liquid soap (as illustrated in [Appendix 1](https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/appendices/appendix-1-best-practice-how-to-hand-wash/) of the NHS NSS National Infection Prevention and Control Manual).
* Dry hands using paper towels.

Note that in the above situations, use of ABHR alone is not sufficient.

### Hand hygiene using hand rub

Used on visibly clean hands:

* before touching a patient;
* before clean/aseptic procedures;
* after body fluid exposure;
* after touching a patient or their immediate surroundings;
* Rub hands using an hand rub as illustrated in [Appendix 2](https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/appendices/appendix-2-best-practice-how-to-hand-rub/) of the NHS NSS National Infection Prevention and Control Manual).
* Be aware that build-up of product on the hands occurs with repeated application. Follow manufacturer’s guidance on the maximum number of applications of hand rubs that can be used on visibly clean hands before hand washing is required.

### Surgical Scrubbing/Rubbing

Used:

* before a surgical procedure is performed
* Use a licensed antimicrobial liquid soap for surgical scrubbing or ABHR licensed for surgical rubbing as illustrated in [Appendix 3](https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/appendices/appendix-3-best-practice-surgical-scrubbing/) and [Appendix 4](https://www.nipcm.scot.nhs.uk/appendices/appendix-4-best-practice-surgical-rubbing/) of the NHS NSS National Infection Prevention and Control Manual.

### Skin Care

* Use an emollient hand cream [e.g. proprietary name] after hand washing at the end of a session to counteract dryness but do not use hand cream under gloves because this can encourage growth of microorganisms.
* The hand cream must not affect the efficacy of hand hygiene products or the integrity of gloves.
* Use only individual tubes of hand cream or hand cream from wall mounted dispensers. Do not use communal tubs.
* Report ongoing skin problems to [e.g. person responsible for IC] and discuss with GP or local Occupational Health Service.

**Version history**

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| **Date** | **Version No.** | **Summary of change(s)** | **Updated by** | **Next review date** |
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The following staff have read and understood this policy [include all team members].

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| **Dental Team Member**  | **Position** | **Signature** | **Date** |
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