



**State of Kuwait  
Ministry of Health  
Infection Control Directorate**



**Title: Hand Hygiene Policy in Healthcare Settings**

<b>Title:</b> Hand Hygiene Policy in Healthcare Settings	<b>Policy Code:</b> P-IC-001
<b>Policy owner:</b> Infection Control Directorate	<b>Effective Date:</b> 2005- 2011- 2013-2018 <b>November - 2019</b>
<b>Section Location:</b> Patient care areas	<b>Approved Date:</b> November 2019
<b>Applies to:</b> All healthcare workers in governmental and private healthcare settings	<b>Revised Date:</b> November 2022
<b>Approved by:</b> Dr. Ahmad Almotawa	

**Purpose:**

- 1- To improve hand hygiene compliance.
- 2- To achieve the annual targeted hand hygiene compliance as a part of the national hand hygiene program

**Policy statement:**

This policy is structured to ensure the implementation of hand hygiene in healthcare settings and emphasize its importance as the single most effective measure to prevent healthcare-associated infections. This policy describes the indications (5 moments) and techniques for hand hygiene.

## Definition:

- **Hygienic Hand Rub:** Treatment of hands with an antiseptic hand rub to reduce the transient flora without necessarily affecting the resident skin flora. These preparations are broad-spectrum and fast-acting, and persistent activity is not necessary.
- **Hygienic Hand Wash:** Treatment of hands with an antiseptic hand wash and water to reduce the transient flora without necessarily affecting the resident skin flora. It is a broad spectrum but is usually less efficient and acts more slowly than the hygienic hand rub.
- **Surgical Hand Scrub/Pre-Surgical Scrub:** Refers to surgical hand preparation with antimicrobial soap and water.
- **Surgical hand rubbing:** Refers to surgical hand preparation with Alcohol-based hand rub.

## Equipment – Ministry of Health approved.

- Alcohol-based (hand) rub products.
- Antimicrobial (Medicated) Soap.

## Procedure: -

### Indications for hand hygiene:

**My 5 Moments for hand hygiene** are the key indications when health-care workers should perform hand hygiene.

- Before touching a patient.
- Before clean/aseptic procedures.
- After body fluid exposure risk.
- After touching a patient.
- After touching the patient's surroundings.

### To Hand Rub or Hand Wash?

- Use an alcohol-based hand rub as the preferred method for routine hand antisepsis in clinical situations other than in those hand washing is essentially required.
- Wash hands with soap and water in the following situations: -
  - ✓ When visibly dirty or visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids.
  - ✓ After using the toilet.
  - ✓ On exposure to potential spore-forming pathogens is strongly suspected or proven, including outbreaks of *Clostridium difficile*, hand washing with soap and water is the preferred means.

**1. Hand Rub: Refer to Appendix 1.**

- Apply a palm-full of alcohol-based hand rub and cover all surfaces of the hands. Rub hands until dry.
- It takes 20-30 seconds

**2. Hand Wash: Refer to Appendix 2.**

When washing hands with soap and water

- Wet hands with water and apply the amount of product necessary to cover all surfaces.
- Rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly with a single-use towel.
- Avoid using hot water, as repeated exposure to hot water may increase the risk of dermatitis.
- Use a paper towel to turn off tap/faucet
- It takes 40-60 seconds

**3. Surgical Hand Preparation.**

- Wash hands and arms with a non-medicated soap before entering the operating theatre area or if hands are visibly soiled.
- Clean subungual areas with a nail file (when needed)
- Brushes should not be used as they may damage the skin and encourage the shedding of cells.

***a. Surgical hand scrub.***

- Washing with hot water should be avoided; using warm water makes antiseptics work more effectively.
- Start timing. Scrub each side of each finger, between the fingers, and the back and front of the hand for 2 minutes.
- Proceed to scrub the arms, keeping the hand higher than the arm at all times. This helps to avoid recontamination of the hands by water from the elbows and prevents bacteria-laden soap and water from contaminating the hands.
- Wash each side of the arm from the wrist to the elbow for 1 minute.

- Repeat the process on the other hand and arm, keeping hands above elbows at all times. If the hand touches anything at any time, the scrub must be lengthened by 1 minute for the area that has been contaminated.
- Rinse hands and arms by passing them through the water in one direction only, from fingertips to elbow. Do not move the arm back and forth through the water.
- Proceed to the operating theatre holding hands above elbows.
- At all times during the scrub procedure, care should be taken not to splash water onto surgical attire.
- Once in the operating theatre, hands and arms should be dried using a sterile towel and aseptic technique before donning gown and gloves.

#### **b. Surgical Hand Rub:**

- Start timing, Refer to Appendix 3
- Repeat the mentioned sequence (average 60 sec) the number of times that adds up to the total duration recommended by the alcohol-based hand rub manufacturer's instructions. This could be two or even three times.

#### **Glove use:-**

- The use of gloves does not replace the need for hand hygiene. Perform hand hygiene before wearing and after removal.
- Select the indication of use and the correct type of gloves **Refer to Appendix 4**
- Remove gloves in the following situations:
  - ✓ As soon as gloves are damaged (or non-integrity suspected).
  - ✓ During patient care, if moving from a contaminated body site to either another body site (including non-intact skin, mucous membrane or medical device) within the same patient or the environment.
  - ✓ After caring for a patient. Do not wear the same pair of gloves for the care of more than one patient.
- Dispose of gloves before leaving the patient's care area.

## Skin & Nail Care:

- HCWs can use hand lotions or creams to minimize the occurrence of contact dermatitis associated with hand hygiene.
- Soap and alcohol-based hand rub should not be used concomitantly.
- Keep nails short and pay attention to them when washing your hands; most microbes on hands come from beneath the fingernails.
- Do not wear artificial nails or nail polish.
- Remove all jewelry (rings, watches, bracelets) before entering the operating theatre.

**\* Infection Control Directorate in Kuwait has introduced a comprehensive 5 multimodal National Hand Hygiene Educational and Motivational Program and patient empowerment since 2013. This program includes system change, training program, evaluation and feedback, reminders in the workplace and patient empowerment.**

## References.

- WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care, First Global Patient Safety Challenge Clean Care is Safer Care (2009).
- Guidelines for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings, 2018, Infection Control Directorate, Ministry of Health, State of Kuwait.

## Appendices:

Appendix 1: Hand Rub technique

Appendix 2: Hand Wash technique

Appendix 3: Surgical Hand Rub

Appendix 4: Glove Use