

3. General hygiene advice

Building up immunity is vital to prevention of communicable diseases. It includes having a well balanced diet, adequate rest and sleep, regular exercise and being a non-smoker.

Good personal, food and environmental hygiene should be observed. Since many germs are transmitted through contact or droplet, performing hand hygiene properly and maintaining respiratory hygiene are two prerequisites for the prevention of infections.

Besides observing their own personal hygiene practices, staff should also supervise and provide support to residents and visitors to enhance their good personal hygiene practices.

3.1 Personal hygiene

3.1.1 Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is a prerequisite for the prevention of many infections. Two hand hygiene practices are recommended: hand washing with liquid soap and using alcohol-based handrub.

Home managers of institutions should provide adequate facilities and put alcohol-based handrub at convenient locations to facilitate staff and residents to perform hand hygiene practices. They should also remind residents and staff of the following:

- Remove artificial nails, rings, watches and bracelets as they may harbour infectious organisms.
- Perform hand hygiene after taking off gloves. Even though gloves are worn, hand hygiene can never be substituted.
- Observe proper hand hygiene techniques irrespective of whether hand washing with liquid soap or alcohol-based handrub is used.
- Staff should perform and assist residents to perform hand hygiene when necessary, e.g. before each meal (for details, please refer to Section 3.1.5).

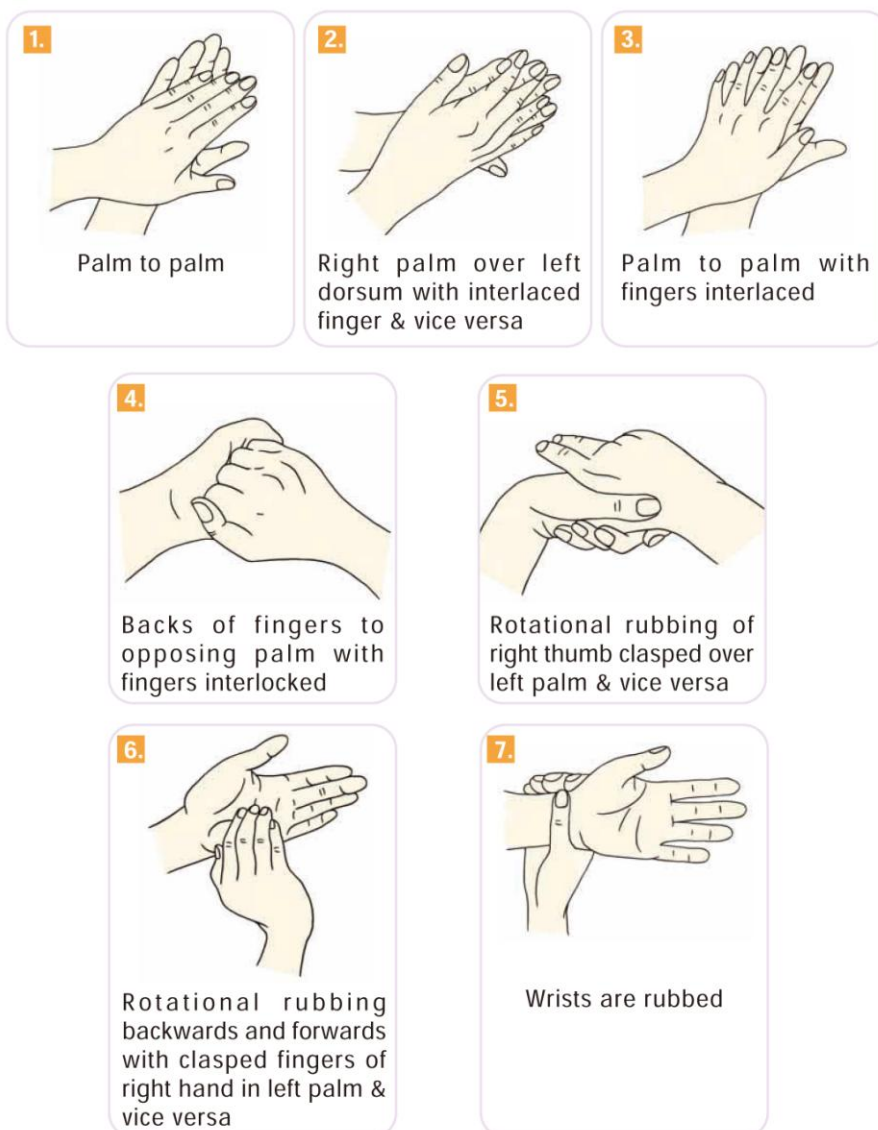
3.1.2 Hand washing

- Wash hands with liquid soap and water when hands are visibly soiled or likely contaminated with body fluid.
- Rub all parts of the hands including the wrists with proper hand hygiene technique for at least 20 seconds (for details, please refer to Section 3.1.4).
- Do not re-contaminate washed hands by touching the faucet directly or sharing towel with others.
- Use disposable paper towel or hand dryer to dry hands.

3.1.3 Alcohol-based handrub

- Using 70-80% alcohol-based handrub to rub hands is effective to prevent contracting and spreading communicable diseases via hands when hands are not visibly soiled.
- Same as hand washing, rub all parts of the hands including the wrists with proper hand hygiene technique for at least 20 seconds (for details, please refer to Section 3.1.4).
- Allow alcohol to evaporate naturally for maximum effect. No need to use paper towels to dry the hands after applying alcohol handrub.

3.1.4 Hand hygiene technique



3.1.5 When to perform hand hygiene

It is impossible to list out all situations when hand hygiene is needed. Basically, hand hygiene should be performed:

General:

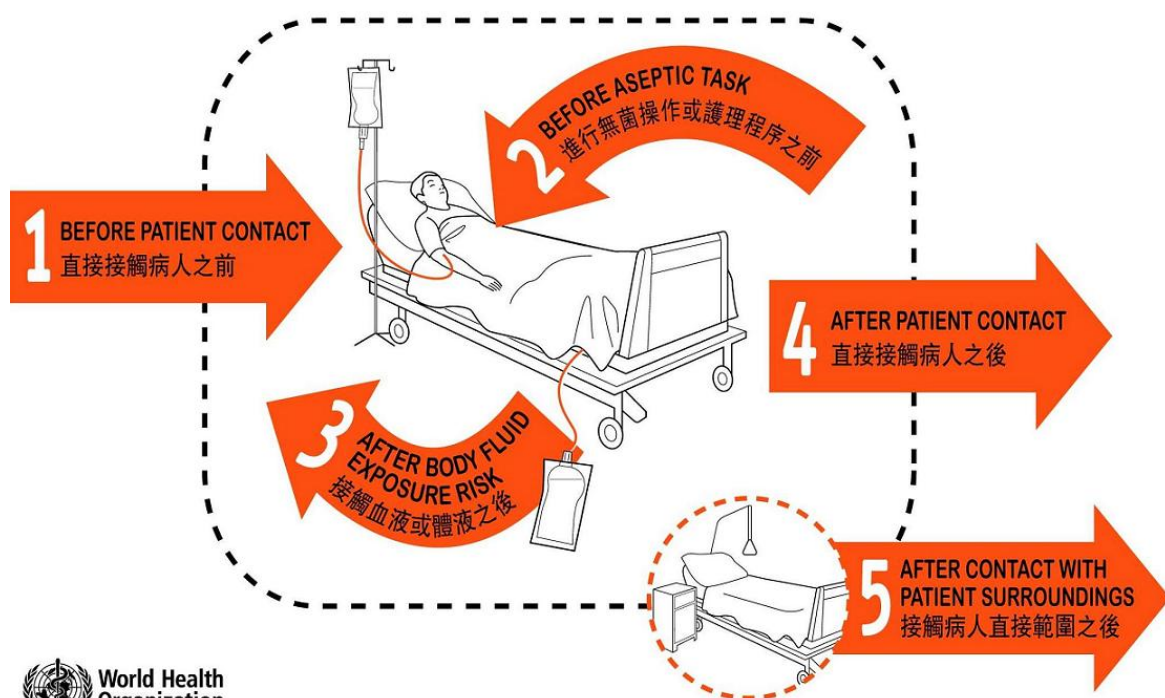
- after sneezing or coughing
- after using toilet
- before touching the eyes, nose, mouth or mucous membrane
- before preparing, handling, serving food or eating
- after touching soiled objects or environments

Related to personal care:

- before and after carrying out nursing procedure involving direct body contact
- before performing a procedure involving an invasive medical device (e.g. urinary catheter)
- after contacting blood, body fluid, secretion, excretion, wound or mucous membrane, e.g. changing diaper or cleansing of respiratory secretions
- after taking off gloves

Your 5 moments for hand hygiene

五個必須潔手的時刻



3.1.6 Respiratory hygiene and cough manners

Everyone should observe respiratory hygiene:

- No spitting.
- Cover both the nose and mouth with tissue paper when coughing or sneezing.
- Wrap up respiratory secretion with tissue paper and discard it into nearby garbage bins with lids or flush them away in the toilet.
- Perform hand washing with liquid soap and water immediately after contacting respiratory secretion or touching objects soiled with respiratory secretions.
- Put on a surgical mask while having respiratory symptoms.

Home managers of institutions should ensure the availability of materials for residents and staff to adhere to “Cough Manners”:

- Provide tissue paper and non-touch garbage bin with lid for disposal of used tissue.
- Provide adequate hand washing items (i.e. liquid soap, paper towels) near sinks, and alcohol-based handrubs at convenient places for use.
- Put up signage and remind people not to spit.

3.1.7 Skin care

Staff should pay attention to the following points for residents’ skin care:

- Help residents to check their skin condition and pay particular attention to skin fold under the armpit, around the neck and groin area.
- Assist dependent residents to dry the skin fold between the toes properly and do not use talcum powder as it forms crusts and causes skin irritation.
- Cleanse and cover abrasion, if present, with dressing to prevent wound infection.
- Advise ambulant residents to put on socks or shoes to prevent abrasion around the soles or toes.

3.2 Food hygiene

3.2.1 Food handlers

- Staff having fever, diarrhoea or vomiting should inform their employers, seek medical advice and be refrained from handling food.
- If there is wound on hands, cover it with waterproof dressing to prevent passing infective agents from the wounds to food.

3.2.2 Kitchen

- Keep kitchen clean and tidy.
- Clean exhaust fan and range hood regularly.
- Keep worktops and floor in kitchen clean and dry.
- Do not store personal items in kitchen, such as clothes and shoes.
- Store utensils in a clean cupboard.
- Always cover garbage bins to avoid breeding of cockroaches, flies and rodents.

3.2.3 Choice of food

- Buy fresh meat and vegetables.
- Do not patronise illegal food hawkers.
- Do not buy packaged food without proper labelling, beyond its expiry date or with damaged packages.
- Do not buy ready-to-eat food and drinks that are displayed together with raw products.
- Do not buy foods which look, smell or taste abnormal.
- Avoid unpasteurised dairy products like raw milk.
- Do not buy excessive food to avoid prolonged storage.

3.2.4 Food preparation

- Wash hands properly before preparing food.
- Wear mask, cap and apron (washable or disposable) during food preparation.
- Wash food thoroughly or scrub them with a brush when appropriate.
- Handle and store raw food and cooked food separately.
- Use separate knives and chopping boards for raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.
- Thaw frozen food completely before cooking. The recommended thawing method are:
 - ◆ thawing in refrigerator
 - ◆ thawing under cold running water
 - ◆ thawing by a microwave oven
- Cook or reheat foods thoroughly before consumption.
- Do not touch cooked food with bare hands.

3.2.5 Food storage

- Keep the storage place clean to avoid pest infestation.
- Store food in well-covered containers.
- Label the expiry date of food which has been prepared and stored for serving later.
- Never leave perishable food in room temperature.
- Store perishable food in the refrigerator immediately after purchasing.
- Before refrigeration, pack the food into smaller portions if it is not intended for use in one go.
- Dispose of surplus food. If surplus food needs to be retained, store it in a refrigerator.
- Keep the temperature inside refrigerator at or below 4°C and freezer at or below -18°C.
- Regularly monitor temperatures of refrigerator and freezer to ensure they are functioning properly. Each refrigerator should have a temperature log book.
- Cleanse freezer or refrigerator at regular intervals.
- Avoid over-packing to allow adequate ventilation inside the refrigerator.
- Do not wrap food directly with newspaper, unclean paper or coloured plastic bags.
- Do not prepare too much food at one time to avoid wastage or over-stocking.
- Follow “Five Keys to Food Safety” (Appendix D) for safe food preparation.

3.3 Environmental hygiene

Since infective agents can survive in the environment for a period of time, it is essential to observe environmental hygiene.

- Maintain good indoor ventilation; open windows wide or turn on exhaust fans.
- Keep appropriate distance between beds (not less than 1 metre) for persons with infectious diseases which are transmitted via droplets to reduce the chance of transmission.
- Empty water in the saucers underneath flower pots and change water in vases at least once a week.
- Top up all defective ground surfaces to prevent accumulation of stagnant water and breeding of mosquitoes.
- Avoid stacking of unnecessary articles to prevent rodent infestation.
- Commence clean-up actions immediately if there are any signs of pest or rodent infestation such as cockroaches, mosquitoes, flies, rats and their excreta.
- Do not keep pets like dogs, cats, poultry or birds in RCHDs.

3.3.1 Choice of disinfectants

Household bleach generally contains 5.25% sodium hypochlorite solution. It is an effective disinfectant when it is diluted appropriately (Appendix E). Care should be taken to avoid its use in metal surfaces since chlorine is corrosive to metal. Please refer to Appendix F for procedures of preparing diluted bleach.

- 1 in 99 diluted household bleach is adequate for usual situation.
- Use 1 in 49 diluted household bleach for surfaces or articles soiled with respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta and in outbreak situation.
- Use 70% alcohol to disinfect metal surfaces.

Apart from bleach, there are many environmental disinfectants in the market. Purchasers should check the content and note the directions for use because different disinfectant is designed for different targeted agents.

3.3.2 General cleansing

- Make sure the air-conditioning systems are well-maintained and the air-filters are cleansed regularly.
- Examine and cleanse residents' lockers regularly to avoid food remnants.
- Cleanse and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and commonly shared items at least daily, e.g. handrails, furniture, computer keyboards. Use 1 in 99 diluted household bleach for non-metallic surfaces and 70% alcohol for metallic surfaces.
- When there are obvious contaminants such as respiratory secretions, vomitus or excreta, wipe the contaminants away with disposable towels first, then disinfect the surface and its neighbouring areas with appropriate disinfectant. Use 1 in 49 diluted household bleach for non-metallic surfaces and 70% alcohol for metallic surfaces.
- Allow bleach to leave on the surface for 15-30 minutes before rinsing with water.

3.3.3 Cleansing and disinfection measures for toilets and bathrooms

- Keep toilets and bathrooms clean and hygienic.
- Provide liquid soap and disposable paper towels or hand dryers for hand washing.
- Ensure the flushing system of the toilet is functioning properly all the times.
- Make sure that the drain pipes are built with U-shaped water traps. Do not alter the pipelines without authorisation.
- Pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet regularly (about once a week) so as to maintain the water column in the pipe as water lock to prevent the spread of micro-organisms.
- Ensure the soil pipes and sewage drains are functioning properly without leakage so as to avoid breeding of infective agents.

3.3.4 Domestic waste disposal

- Discard rubbish into a garbage bin with lid.
- Keep the garbage bins always covered.
- Empty garbage bins at least once a day, even it is not full.
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling garbage.

3.3.5 Disinfection of cleansing tools

- Rinse floor mop, wipers or other cleansing tools with water to remove solid or bulky waste.
- Immerse them into 1 in 49 diluted household bleach for 30 minutes for decontamination.
- Then wash with clean water.
- Re-use after they are thoroughly dried.

3.4 Vaccination

Residents of RCHDs may develop severe or even fatal complications when they suffer from influenza. The Department of Health offers free influenza vaccination to residents and staff of RCHDs annually through the Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme. They are encouraged to receive influenza vaccination unless they have contraindications. Free pneumococcal vaccinations are also provided for those residents who are aged 65 or above and have never received the vaccination before.

The Department of Health or private doctors may also provide other vaccines to individuals or target groups for protection against certain infectious diseases. Staff or residents who want to get vaccinated for their personal protection can seek advice from doctors and consider the service fee.