



Improving Hand Hygiene in Ambulatory, Community and Mental Health Workplace Settings

We encourage sites to talk about hand hygiene and provide a safe place for staff to provide feedback on the barriers they face during their day-to-day work. We hope some of the recommendations below will help programs improve their hand hygiene compliance. Ambulatory and Community Infection Control Practitioners (ICP's) are available to support your program to make improvement. Please reach out with questions, comments or feedback to ICP-ambulatorycommunity@vch.ca



Make Hand Hygiene Easy for Staff

- Compliance improves when hand hygiene is within arms reach for staff
- Consider increasing the number and placement of ABHR dispensers (e.g. inside exam rooms)
- Provide personal sized ABHR, soap, lotion and paper towels for staff working in outreach, home care and MHSU

Maintaining Healthy Hands

- Staff should be provided with hand lotion as part of a comprehensive hand hygiene program
- Staff experiencing on-going skin breakdown attributed to hand hygiene should be referred to occupational health and safety for assessment
- Proper hand hygiene technique and proper glove use contribute to healthy hands and skin

Client, Family and Visitor Education

- Talk to clients, family and visitors about the importance of hand hygiene and how it contributes to client safety
- Post signage to remind clients, families and visitors to perform hand hygiene
- Teach clients or family members engaging in their own care to complete hand hygiene prior to performing a clinical intervention (e.g. tube feed care)
- Post hand hygiene signage in public washrooms to remind clients and visitors to perform hand hygiene

When Soap and Water is not Easily Accessible

- When hands are visibly soiled:
 1. Provide sani-hands towelettes so staff can remove visible soil
 2. Perform soap and water hand hygiene once access to hand hygiene sink is available
- It is the organizations responsibility to provide staff with the hand hygiene products they need to perform work safely
- Provide staff with personal sized soap, ABHR and access to paper towels so they don't need to use client provided products

Infrastructure at Point-of-Care

Education

Hand Care & Skin Integrity

Set Expectations

Clients, Families and Visitors

Build a Supportive Culture

Hand Hygiene Sink Access

Clean Hands Zones

Give Staff the Tools They Need

- Talk about Hand Hygiene at safety huddles
- Ask your ICP to provide education for your team
- Complete necessary education on learning hub
- Know the 4 Moments of Hand Hygiene
- Read the VCH Hand Hygiene Policy to understand your role in promoting safety through hand hygiene

Hand Adornment

- Acrylic nails, nail polish and jewelry can serve as reservoirs for infectious organisms - set expectations that these are not appropriate for staff who engage in direct patient care
- Encourage staff to keep their nails clean and trimmed (less than 3mm in length)

Constructive Feedback

- Create a safe space for staff to ask questions or highlight areas for improvement (e.g. more wall mounted dispensers needed in clinical areas)
- Make it acceptable for staff to provide feedback to each other about their hand hygiene (e.g. missed opportunities, technique)
- Make it fun to provide feedback (e.g. contests)

Visual Reminders

- Post signage in areas where hand hygiene is particularly important (e.g. clean supply rooms; soiled utility rooms)
- Building entry and exits
- Areas where clean supplies are accessed