

World Hand Hygiene Day

Special Edition



Wirral Community
Health and Care
NHS Foundation Trust



In this issue

1. World Hand Hygiene Day 2025
2. Hand hygiene when caring for people with diarrhoea
3. Bare Below the Elbow for effective hand hygiene
4. WHO 5 moments of hand hygiene
5. Did you know... five facts on hand hygiene
6. Gloves do not replace hand hygiene
7. The IPC Digital Hub

1. World Hand Hygiene Day 2025

This year, the World Health Organization (WHO) marks 17 years of World Hand Hygiene Day. WHO's message is clear: **Save lives. Clean your hands.**

This is a stark reminder of the importance of hand hygiene and how it is everyone's responsibility to practise effective hand hygiene, whatever your role.

This Special Edition provides you with essential information to support you with hand hygiene practice, to keep yourself and those you care for safe.

2. Hand hygiene when caring for people with diarrhoea

Alcohol handrub **should not** be used for hand hygiene when caring for patients with diarrhoea or C.Diff. Always remember to wash your hands with soap and water.

The Wirral has seen an increase in C.Diff cases so we must all work together to reduce the spread of this infection.

3. Bare Below the Elbow for effective hand hygiene

Effective hand hygiene includes being Bare Below the Elbow. Bare Below the Elbow applies to all staff when providing direct care. It also applies to all staff at all times when in clinical uniform, to ensure a professional image is maintained.



Bare Below the Elbow means:

- Clean, short, natural fingernails that are free from varnish, gel, shellac or any nail covering (nail salons apparently offer so-called 'NHS' clear artificial nails – these are not acceptable).
- No false nails, nail extensions or overlays.
- No jewellery, including wristwatches, activity trackers, bracelets, hair bobbles etc, on the hands or wrists.
- No engraved/stoned rings as they carry the risk of harbouring micro-organisms. One plain wedding band type ring is acceptable.
- No long-sleeved clothing (during clinical care).

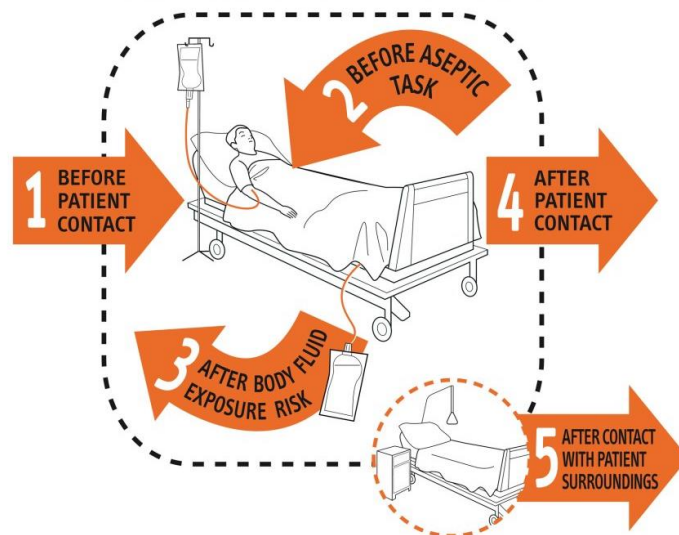
When you're in uniform, stop and look – are you bare below the elbow?

4. WHO 5 moments of hand hygiene

Safe hand hygiene practice protects everyone and prevents the transmission of infection. The World Health Organization **5 Moments for Hand Hygiene** are the key moments when hand decontamination should be performed, these are:

- before touching a patient;
- before clean/aseptic procedures;
- after body fluid exposure/risk;
- after touching a patient; and
- after touching patient surroundings

5 moments for HAND HYGIENE



5. Did you know... five facts on hand hygiene

- Did you know **germs can survive for up to three hours** on your hands?
- The **average person touches their face 23 times per hour**, making hand hygiene essential in helping prevent germs from entering the body through the eyes, nose and mouth.
- The average person washes their hands after going to the toilet, for **just six seconds**. For effective hand hygiene we should be spending **at least 20 seconds** washing our hands.
- Alcohol gel is not effective against C.diff bacteria and should not be used if caring for someone with diarrhoea.
- Sometimes people use gloves instead of washing their hands - gloves can spread germs too. It's important to only use gloves when it is required.

6. Gloves do not replace hand hygiene

Regardless of whether gloves are worn, hand hygiene at the right times and in the right way is still one of the most important measures to protect patients and staff.

Gloves can get contaminated as easily as bare hands and are not a substitute for effective hand hygiene.

When using gloves, remember to put on and remove correctly. Watch the following WHO video for guidance:

[Health care-associated infections: How to put on single use, disposable gloves & how to remove them](#)

7. The IPC Digital Hub

The IPC Digital Hub is a one stop shop for all things infection prevention and control.

From online tools, resources, newsletters and an electronic referral form, to comprehensive training packages, an e-leaflet library, videos and localised campaign materials, the digital hub has everything you need. You can access the hub via our [public website](#).