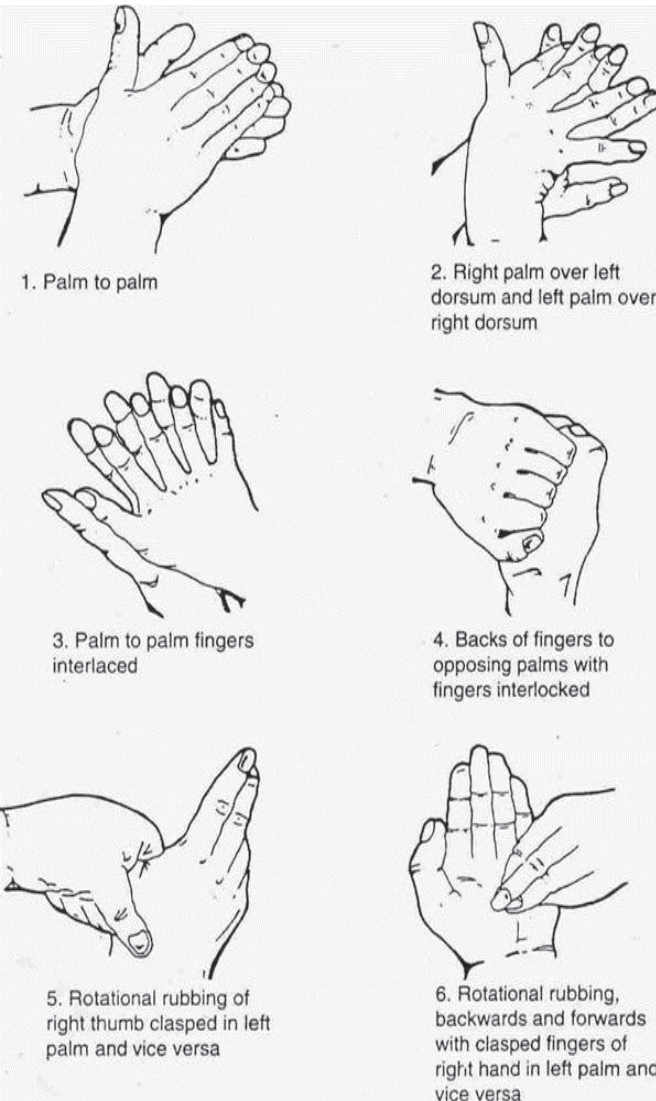


Hand Hygiene Technique



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This leaflet was produced by the NRH Department of Infection Prevention and Control.



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**National Rehabilitation
University Hospital**

Ant OspidéalN áisiúnta Athshlánúcháin

Hand Hygiene Guide for Patients



Clean Hands Save Lives:
Information for Patients,
Families, Carers and Visitors



The [National Rehabilitation Hospital](http://www.nrh.ie) is accredited by CARF (Commission for accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) for a range of services, confirming they meet recognized international standards

Why is hand hygiene so important?

Hand Hygiene is the single most effective action that can be taken to prevent the spread of infection.

All patients admitted to hospitals are at risk of healthcare associated infection.

Hand hygiene removes most organisms (germs) picked up by the hands. It also helps to reduce the number of germs that normally live on the skin.

Effective hand hygiene will both give you protection, and help prevent the transfer of germs to other people.

Who needs to practice hand hygiene?

You, your family and carers, and your friends and visitors should remember to practice hand hygiene often. You are also encouraged to ask staff members if they have cleaned their hands.



When should you clean your hands?

The most important times to clean your hands are as follows:-

- ◇ After using the toilet
- ◇ After blowing your nose, or covering a sneeze or cough
- ◇ Before and after carrying out self-intermittent catheterization
- ◇ Before and after emptying your catheter bag
- ◇ Before and after visiting another patient
- ◇ Before preparing or eating food

Remember—if you are unable to clean your hands yourself, please ask a staff member to help you.

What should I use to perform hand hygiene?



Use **soap and water**:

- ◇ When your hands look dirty
- ◇ If you have C. difficile infection

Use **alcohol hand rub** at all other times

How should I perform effective hand hygiene?

When using soap and water:



- Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap
- Wash your hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using the technique shown in the diagram overleaf
- Rinse your hands well under running water
- Dry your hands with a paper towel and use the towel to turn off the tap.

When using alcohol hand rub:



- Apply enough alcohol hand rub to cover both hands
- Using the technique shown overleaf, continue rubbing your hands until they are dry—this should take about 20 seconds
- You should not rinse your hands with water or dry them with a paper towel.