

# HAND WASHING

INFORMATION FOR OUR VALUED PATIENTS AND VISITORS



## Why Hand Hygiene Is So Important

While in hospital, patients are more likely to get infections. A “hospital acquired infection” is one that a patient does not have before coming to the hospital but that occurs 48 to 72 hours after admission.

Research shows that properly washing your hands is the single most effective way that you and your health care team can lower your risk of getting a hospital acquired infection.

## Did You Wash Your Hands?

While you are admitted, or even after you are discharged from hospital, you should feel comfortable to ask your health care provider, “Did you wash your hands?”

The Heart Institute posts hand hygiene compliance rates. You can see the information on our website under “Quality Care & Performance.”

## When You Should Wash Your Hands

It is very important for patients and visitors to wash their hands, too. Particularly at these times:

- Before eating
- Before taking medications
- After using the washroom
- Before and after leaving your room



## Washing with Soap and Water

- Wash with soap and water when your hands are visibly dirty.
- It takes 40 to 60 seconds to properly wash your hands with soap and water.

## Washing with Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer

- Use hand sanitizer to wash your hands unless your hands are visibly dirty.
- It takes 20 to 30 seconds to properly wash your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

## If You Still Have Questions

If you still have questions or concerns about hand hygiene or hospital acquired infections, please do not hesitate to speak with your nurse or the clinical manager of your area.

## For More Information

Patient education material can be found at the entrance to every inpatient ward and in the first and second floor waiting areas.

If you have comments about this or any other patient education material provided by the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, please contact the Quality Department:



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