

## GLACIER VIEW LODGE

### HAND HYGIENE PROTOCOL

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#### **Rationale:**

Hand Hygiene refers to the removing and killing of micro-organisms (germs) on the hands when performed correctly. Hand Hygiene (see Vancouver Island Infection Prevention and Control Manual) is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and infections. In health care, Hand Hygiene is used to eliminate transient organisms that have been picked up via contact with patients, contaminated equipment, or the environment. Hand Hygiene may be performed either by using soap and running water or with alcohol-based hand rubs.

#### **When should Hand Hygiene be performed?**

##### All Staff:

- Before starting work
- Before and after contact with a resident, their body substances or items contaminated by them
- Between different procedures on the same resident
- Before performing invasive procedure
- Before preparing, handling, serving, or eating food and/or feeding a resident
- Before putting on and after taking off gloves as gloves are permeable and act like greenhouses for growing bugs.
- After performing personal functions, i.e. going to the toilet, blowing nose
- When hands come in contact with secretions, blood and other body fluids. Use soap and running water when hands are visibly soiled.
- On exiting a resident's room
- After disposing of dirty linen & laundry or garbage
- After portering or touching resident equipment

##### Housekeeping:

- After each patient environment
- After handling mop heads/buckets
- After disposing of garbage
- Before and after taking gloves off

##### Dining Room:

- When clean chain (see VIHA Infection Prevention and Control Manual) has been broken
- Following contact with residents' equipment: wheelchair, bibs, teeth, utensils

#### **Hand-washing**

No rings, watches, false nails, long nails or nails with chipped nail polish are permitted.

Rings and watches are places that bacteria can collect and are hard to clean. They hide bacteria and viruses from the mechanical action of hand-washing/hand rubs.

Artificial nails, nail enhancements, and long (3-4 mm) nails also trap bacteria; and are difficult to clean.

### **Hand-washing continued**

Chipped nail polish is bad as bacteria becomes trapped along the chipped edges and can't easily be washed off.

### **Hand Washing Procedure**

1. Wet hands with warm running water, leave water running.
2. Add soap; rub hands together making a soapy lather. Do this for a minimum of 15 seconds (time enough to sing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star twice), being careful not to wash the lather away. Wash the front and back of hands as well as between your fingers and under nails.
3. Rinse hands under warm running water using a rubbing motion.
4. Wipe and dry hands gently with a paper towel (rubbing vigorously can damage skin).
5. Use a dry paper towel to turn off water tap so as not to re-contaminate your hands.
6. Use a lotion to prevent dryness when you are washing your hands frequently as dry, broken skin is a place for germs to hide.

### **Alcohol-Based Hand Rubs**

Alcohol-based hand rubs must contain more than 60% alcohol to be effective as a disinfectant of hands. They are to be used only if there is no visible dirt present on hands or in the event of no running water.

### **Using an Alcohol-Based Rub**

1. Apply enough antiseptic rub to make the size of a quarter into your hands, enough that when you rub your hands together it will cover your hands, front and back, and be able to get under your nails. Usually equals 1-2 squirts.
2. Use a rubbing motion to evenly distribute the antiseptic product all over your hand surfaces, particularly between fingers, fingertips, and base of thumbs. Rub together until hands become dry, usually 30 seconds minimum.

Use lotion to prevent dryness when you use alcohol-based rubs frequently as this can dry your skin out. Dry, broken skin is another place for germs to hide.