



health
promotion

Hand Hygiene

Hands pick up micro-organisms(germs) in a number of ways.

- Touching mouth, eyes or nose when around someone who has sneezed or coughed.
- not washing hands before and after preparing food, after handling raw meat, and after using the washroom.
- From the germs left on shared objects like doorknobs, keyboards, and other equipment in the home/workplace

Follow these steps to thoroughly rid hands of germs.

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Remove any hand or arm jewellery.
- Wash the front and back of hands, as well as between fingers and under nails.
- Wipe and dry hands with a paper towel or clean towel.

When using hand sanitizers

- An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.
- If hands are visibly soiled, remove the soil, then use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Make sure hands are dry, as wet hands will dilute the product.
- Use enough product to cover all surfaces of hands and fingers.

Myths

- **Hand sanitizers kill 99.9% of germs** – 40-60% of germs actually are killed
- **All sanitizer brands are the same** –can have different % of ethyl or isopropyl alcohol
- **Using too much will create resistant super bacteria** – alcohol destroys germs upon contact.

Tips

- **Look for an alcohol level of 60-95%**
- **Use it unsparingly**
- **Use alcohol based sanitizers**

The use of gloves does not replace the need for hand hygiene. Below are some recommendations when using gloves:

- Change or remove gloves after touching a contaminated environmental surface
- Discard gloves after use
- Do not wash or reuse gloves

Resources

Local Health and Safety rep

Health Promotion Services: CFB Halifax and Region
902-722-4956

<http://cdha.nshealth.ca/infection-prevention-andcontrol/hand-hygiene>

http://novascotia/dhw/publications/Public-Health-Education/03007_HandWashingPoster_En.pdf

All contacts at the Base Hospital On DWAN:

<http://Halifax.mil.ca/CFBHalifax?canadianForcesHealthServices?>