

Hand Hygiene Facts and Quiz

Hand
hygiene
saves lives!



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Hand Hygiene



What is hand hygiene?

- Hand washing with soap and water or use of a waterless, alcohol-based hand rub

Why all the fuss about hand hygiene?

- Hand hygiene reduces the number of infections acquired in healthcare facilities
- Hand hygiene helps prevent the spread of antimicrobial resistance
- The most common mode of transmission of pathogens is via the hands!



Colonization Vs. Infection



Colonized or Infected: What is the Difference?

- People who carry bacteria without evidence of infection (fever, increased white blood cell count, etc.) are colonized
- If an infection develops, it is usually from bacteria that colonize residents
- Bacteria that colonize residents can be transmitted from one resident to another by the hands of healthcare workers



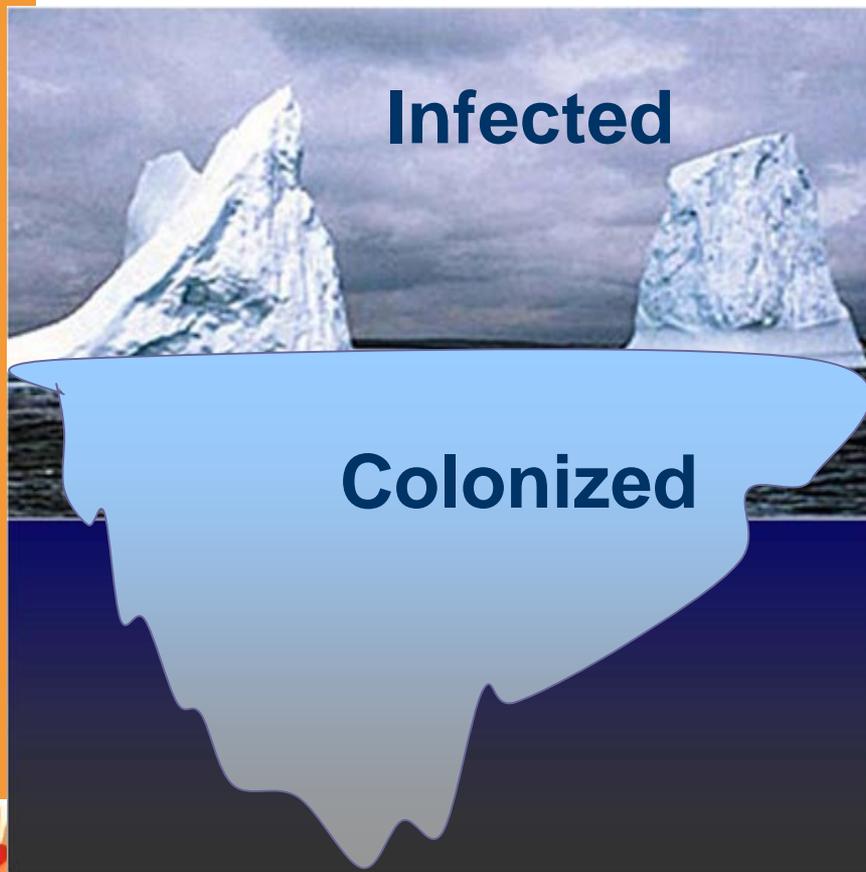
Bacteria can be transmitted even if the resident is not infected



Colonization Vs. Infection



The Iceberg Effect



- Residents infected with an organism represent just the “tip of the iceberg” of residents that are colonized or infected.
- A resident without signs of infection can still carry organisms that could be spread to another resident if proper hand hygiene and other infection control precautions are not taken.

Hand Hygiene Question #1



What is the single most important way to prevent the spread of infections?

Answer: Good hand hygiene.

Good hand hygiene can:

- Stop outbreaks in healthcare facilities
- Reduce the spread of antimicrobial resistant organisms
- Reduce overall infection rates



Hand Hygiene Question #2



Which of these hand hygiene methods will kill bacteria?

- Plain soap and water
- Antimicrobial soap and water
- Alcohol-based hand rubs

Answer: B and C.

- Use antimicrobial soap and rub your hands for at least 20 seconds and rinse with warm water.
- As an alternative, alcohol-based hand rubs are convenient, portable, quicker, and just as effective as soap and water at decreasing the number of organisms on your hands.
- Cleaning your hands with plain soap and water will remove bacteria, but not kill bacteria.



Hand Hygiene Question #3



True or False:

When a healthcare worker touches a resident who is colonized but not infected with resistant organisms (e.g., MRSA or VRE) the healthcare worker's hands can spread resistant organisms to other residents and the environment.

Answer: True. Residents who are colonized, but not infected, with bacteria can spread germs to the hands of healthcare workers then to other residents and the environment - unless you practice good hand hygiene!



Hand Hygiene Question #4



True or False:

Use of artificial nails by healthcare workers poses no risk to residents.

Answer: False. Even after careful hand washing, germs can live under your fingernails. Studies have shown that healthcare workers who wear artificial nails are more likely to have germs on their fingertips than those who have natural nails - both before and after they wash their hands.



Hand Hygiene Question #5



True or False:

If you wear gloves while caring for a resident, you don't have to wash your hands.

Answer: False. Gloves are recommended for three reasons:

1. To reduce the risk of healthcare workers acquiring infections from residents;
2. To prevent spreading germs from the healthcare worker to residents; and
3. To reduce contamination of the hands of healthcare workers that can be spread from one resident to another.

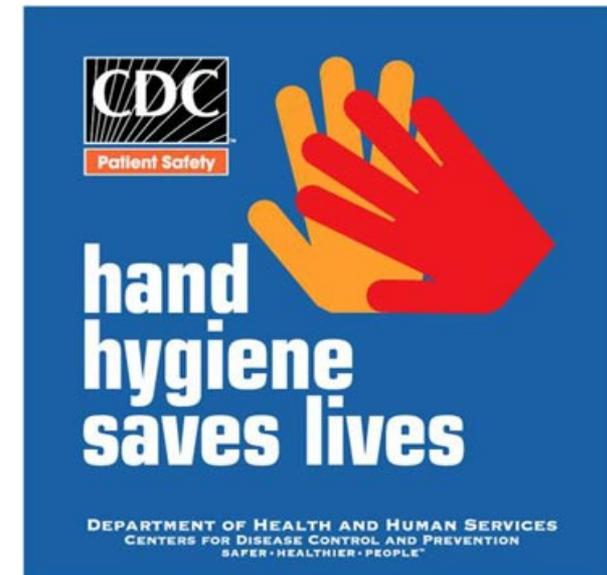
Remove gloves after completing the resident care activity; clean your hands immediately after removing gloves.



Hand Hygiene Conclusions



- Good hand hygiene stops outbreaks in healthcare facilities, and reduces transmission of antimicrobial resistant organisms (e.g. MRSA) and overall infection rates.
- The use of gloves does not eliminate the need for hand hygiene. Likewise, the use of hand hygiene does not eliminate the need for gloves.
- Bacteria that colonize residents can be transmitted from one resident to another by the hands of healthcare workers.



Source: CDC. Hand hygiene in healthcare settings. <http://www.cdc.gov/HandHygiene>
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