

**CLEAN HANDS****COUNT** FOR SAFE HEALTHCARE

On average, healthcare providers clean their hands **less than half** of the times they should. That means you might be leaving yourself and your patients at risk for potentially deadly infections.

**FACT:** Healthcare providers might need to clean their hands as many as **100 times per 12-hour shift**, depending on the number of patients and intensity of care. Know what it could take to keep your patients safe.

**KNOW HOW GERMS SPREAD**

Most germs that cause healthcare-associated infections are spread by **people's actions**.

Many potentially deadly germs are spread from patient to patient on the **hands of healthcare providers**.

Consider whether your actions put you or your patients at risk of infection.

Clean your hands often to protect yourself and your patients.

**PATIENT ZONE:**

Clean your hands before and after contact with the patient zone.

**ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER**

The preferred way to clean your hands

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is more effective than soap and water (except during a **C. difficile** outbreak):

- It is less damaging to your hands than soap and water.
- It kills the bad germs that you might pick up on your hands while caring for patients. The good germs quickly grow back on your skin.

**BAD GERMS****GOOD GERMS (Normal Flora)****TECHNIQUE MATTERS WHEN CLEANING YOUR HANDS**

It only counts if you use the right amount, the right way.

- ▶ Use enough alcohol-based hand sanitizer to cover all surfaces of your hands.
- ▶ You might need more than one pump.
- ▶ For alcohol-based hand sanitizer, your hands should stay wet for **around 20 seconds** if you used the right amount.

**ALCOHOL-BASED HAND SANITIZER****C. DIFFICILE REQUIRES SPECIAL CARE**

- ▶ **C. difficile** forms spores that are **not killed by alcohol-based hand sanitizer**.
- ▶ Always use **gloves** when caring for patients with **C. difficile**. In addition, when there is an outbreak of **C. difficile** in your facility, wash your hands with **soap and water** after removing your gloves.

**GLOVES ARE NOT ENOUGH**

Wearing gloves is **NOT** a substitute for cleaning your hands.

- ▶ Your hands can get contaminated while wearing or removing gloves.
- ▶ Cleaning your hands after removing your gloves will help prevent the spread of potentially deadly germs.



**CONTAMINATION DURING GLOVE REMOVAL IS COMMON**

Protect Yourself. Protect Your Patients.



Who do your **#CLEANHANDSCOUNT** for?



[www.cdc.gov/HandHygiene](http://www.cdc.gov/HandHygiene)

This material was developed by CDC. The Clean Hands Count Campaign is made possible by a partnership between the CDC Foundation and GOJO.