

# Hand Hygiene

When working in the health care field, keeping an eye on hand hygiene can help reduce the spread of antimicrobial resistant organisms as well as other infections in healthcare facilities.

## Soap and water and hand rubs

- In addition to traditional hand washing with soap and water, the CDC recommends the use of alcohol-based hand rubs for patient care.
- When health care personnel's hands are visibly soiled, they should wash with soap and water.
- The use of gloves does not eliminate the need for hand hygiene. Gloves reduce hand contamination by 70 to 80 percent. They can also prevent cross-contamination and protect both patients and health care personnel from infection.
- Hand rubs should be used before and after each patient, just as gloves should be changed before and after each patient.
- When using an alcohol-based hand rub, apply the product to the palm of one hand, and then rub the hands together, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers. Continue rubbing until your hands are dry. Check the label to see how much product you should use.
- Because rubs take less time, it's estimated that during an eight hour shift, an ICU nurse will save about an hour of time by using rubs instead of traditional water and soap.

## Other ways to stay safe

- Health care personnel should avoid wearing artificial nails and keep natural nails less than one quarter of an inch long. This is especially important for those that care for patients at high risk of getting an infection.
- When choosing which products to use in a health care facility, you should consider the efficiency of the product as well as those that will be using them. Things like smell, consistency, color, and the effect of dryness on hands could affect how well employees use the products.
- The CDC recommends having a system in place to make sure everyone is following hand hygiene recommendations.
- Keep an eye out for any possible allergies to the products being used in your health care facility.

For more information and additional risk management and prevention tools, visit: [fwcruminsurance.com](http://fwcruminsurance.com)