

## Hand hygiene information

### Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01392 402093 or at [rduh.pals-eastern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-eastern@nhs.net) (for Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter services) or on 01271 314090 or at [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net) (for North Devon services).

### Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is the most effective method of preventing and controlling the spread of infection. It is extremely important that all staff, patients and visitors have clean hands.

There are two main ways to clean your hands – either washing them with soap and running water or using alcohol hand gel (sanitiser).

### How staff, patients and visitors can help prevent the spread of infections

- Staff must adhere to 'bare below the elbows' and the '5 moments for hand hygiene'.
- Patients must be given the opportunity to clean their hands regularly using soap and water, hand/wet wipes or alcohol hand gel if appropriate.
- Patients and visitors should always wash their hands after using bathroom or toilet facilities, before eating food, after coughing or sneezing into their hands or when their hands are visibly dirty.

### Washing your hands with liquid soap and water

- Wet your hands under running water and apply liquid soap.
- Rub your hands together, ensuring all areas are covered (as shown in the diagram on page 2).
- Rinse thoroughly under running water.
- Dry your hands thoroughly using a disposable paper towel or automated hand dryer.
- Dispose of used paper towels in an appropriate waste bin. Waste bins in hospitals will be foot-operated pedal bins. These help to prevent recontamination of your hands by lifting the lid of the bin.

## Using alcohol hand gel

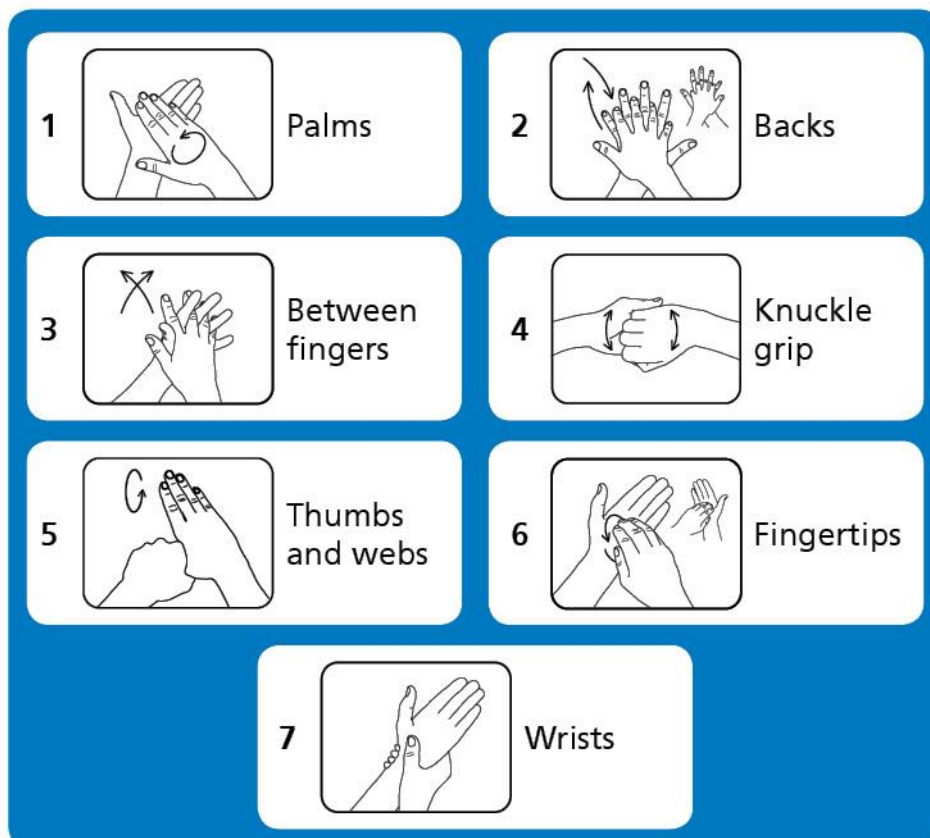
- Alcohol hand gel should only be used on hands that are not visibly dirty.
- Apply alcohol hand gel to your (dry) hands.
- Rub your hands together, ensuring all areas are covered (as shown in the diagram below).
- Allow the alcohol hand gel to dry on your hands.

## Remember 'it's OK to ask' and it's everyone's responsibility to remind

As a patient in hospital, you should expect to see staff clean their hands before and after they provide care to you. If you think a staff member has forgotten, 'it's OK to ask'

If you would like to clean your hands but can't get to a sink, staff can assist by providing hand/wet wipes or alcohol gel as appropriate.

## Good hand hygiene only takes 20 seconds



## Further information

If you have any questions that we have not answered in this leaflet, please ask your nurse or doctor caring for you on the ward or contact one of the Infection Control nurses.

For Eastern services, call 01392 402355.

For Northern services, call 01271 322680.

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## PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern, please contact:

PALS Mid Devon, East Devon and Exeter

- call 01392 402093 or email [rduh.pals-eastern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-eastern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital in Wonford, Exeter.

PALS North Devon

- call 01271 314090 or email [rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net](mailto:rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net). You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at the North Devon District Hospital in Barnstaple.

## Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk).

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