

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

TIPS ON HANDWASHING



WHAT ARE INFECTIONS?

Infection is the process by which germs, such as bacteria and viruses, enter the body, multiply, and damage tissues, resulting in illness. Having cancer and undergoing certain types of cancer treatment can increase a person's risk of developing an infection.

HOW CAN INFECTIONS BE PREVENTED?

HANDWASHING, both at home and in the hospital, is the single most important measure for preventing the development and spread of infections.

Hands should be washed with soap for 10 to 15 seconds, followed by rinsing with water.

Alternatively, hands may be cleansed with a waterless, alcohol-based solution, which is rubbed into the hands and allowed to dry. Alcohol hand rubs have been shown to be as effective as handwashing for removing germs from the hands.

WHEN SHOULD HANDS BE CLEANSED?

Hands should be washed frequently, especially when visibly soiled, before preparing food, before eating, after using the bathroom, after contact with pets, and after contact with any body fluids, secretions, or excretions.

WHO SHOULD WASH THEIR HANDS?

Good hand hygiene should be practiced by patients, family members, visitors, and health care providers. Insist that persons who care for you wash their hands, or use an alcohol hand rub, especially before any treatment or procedure.