

## Hand hygiene is key to infection prevention

### How to wash your hands:

- Apply alcohol based hand rub  
*or*
- Wet hands with water
- Apply soap
- Rub hands together for 15 seconds
- Rinse hands well
- Dry hands with paper towel
- Turn off tap with used paper towel

*Thank you for your help and cooperation*

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This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask your physician, local health unit or health care professional.

This information was obtained from the following source:

Centre for Disease Control (Aug, 2009).  
*Respiratory Hygiene.*

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## Respiratory Etiquette



## Patient/Visitor Information

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## What Causes a Respiratory Tract Infection?

Respiratory tract infections such as colds, influenza (flu) or pneumonia which are caused by germs (viruses and bacteria). Fever, new onset of cough or shortness of breath are the most common symptoms of these infections.

### How Do Those Germs Spread?

Even if your hands appear to be clean, they may carry germs. Hands pick up germs in a number of ways.

- When people who are sick sneeze or cough, the germs that are making them sick are expelled into the air in tiny droplets
- If these droplets get onto your face (mouth, eyes, nose) you may get the infection
- If these droplets get onto your hands, and then you touch your mouth, eyes or nose without washing away the germs you carry the infection

## How Can You Avoid Spreading a Respiratory Tract Infection?

- When coughing or sneezing turn your head away from others
- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth
- If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Discard tissue in a garbage bin
- Clean your hands often during the day, especially after coughing or blowing your nose
- While in the hospital you may be asked to wear a mask if you have a fever and a cough and/or shortness of breath

### What Can You Do to Protect Patients During Your Visit?

- If you are sick postpone your visit
- Clean your hands before and after contact with the patient or their environment
- Do not share items that go into your mouth (utensils, straws etc.)
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes
- STOP and ask a nurse what to do if you see a STOP sign outside the patient room. Follow the instructions the nurse gives you
- For visitors, please do not eat or drink in the room where a precaution sign is posted

### Important to Remember...

While visiting someone in the hospital please remember to screen yourself for symptoms. **If you have a fever or chills and/or a new or worsening cough please do not visit.**

If you are asked by a nurse to wear a mask with face shield or goggles while present in the hospital, please wear it correctly:

- The mask must cover your nose and mouth
- Change your mask if it is wet
- Keep mask on for your entire visit within the hospital
- Discard your mask into a wastebasket when leaving



***Wash hands frequently with soap and water***