



Local Managers should communicate these key IPC messages to their staff at handovers, staff meetings, huddles etc.

**Introduction:** Handwashing is the single most important activity for preventing the spread of pathogens on to other surfaces or healthcare equipment.

Transient bacteria are present on the hands of health care workers. Hands become easily contaminated after touching the environment, equipment or after coming into contact with body fluids (sneezing, coughing, touching your face).

If hands are not properly decontaminated at appropriate intervals pathogens can be transferred on to other surfaces and equipment including medical instruments, work stations and processing equipment.

### Key information:

#### When?

1. On entering and exiting each work area
2. Before donning (putting on) PPE and after doffing (removing) PPE
3. After cleaning
4. After coughing, sneezing or touching your face
5. After touching your surroundings (computers, scanners, telephones etc)
6. Between each task

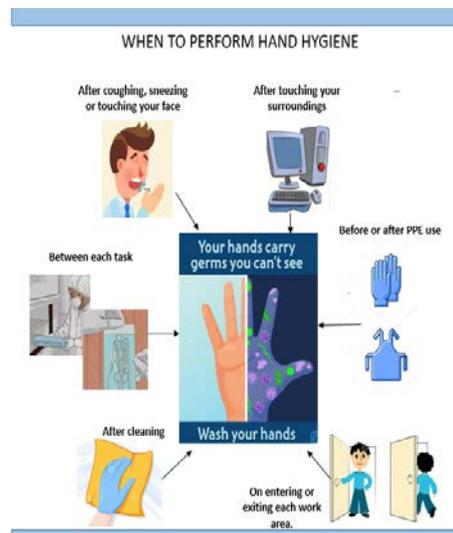
#### What?

- Alcohol Based Hand Rub (ABHR) can be used when hands are visibly clean and no skin contact with body fluids. No maximum times ABHR can be used before hand washing is necessary.
- Soap and water should be used when hands are visibly dirty and after contact with body fluids. Recontamination can occur when touching taps or bin lids.

#### Bare below the elbows –

- Before performing hand hygiene expose forearms (bare below the elbows).
- Hand washing should be extended to the forearms if there has been exposure of forearms to blood and/or body fluids.
- Nails should be cut short with no nail polish (clear or otherwise) or false nail products.
- Remove all hand and wrist jewellery including watches, Fitbits, Garmins and other technical devices. One plain band ring may be worn.

**Technique and Time** – The 6 Step technique should be utilised for all hand hygiene, lasting between 20-30 seconds for technique alone. ABHR should continue to be rubbed in till dry.



**Skin Health** – Emollient creams are provided to help counteract the drying effects of hand hygiene and can be used throughout your working day for this purpose. Line management should be informed of any chronic skin issues and if required a referral or self-referral to Occupational Health can be made.

**Products** – Only use products as supplied by NHSGGC. Other soaps, ABHRs and creams may not be tested for efficiency and can destroy gloves when used.

For further information, guidance and resources, visit the NHS GGC Infection Prevention and Control web page or contact your local IPCT.