

Our Challenge

One in every nine hospital patients in Canada contracts a healthcare-associated infection (HAI)¹. Each year, it is estimated that there are more than 220,000 cases of HAI in hospitals in Canada, resulting in at least 8,000 deaths.² At least 30% of HAIs can be prevented by following infection prevention and control strategies.³ Imagine being able to help those patients with something so simple as... better hand hygiene.

Hand hygiene is a key component of an effective infection prevention and control program that can make all the difference. Despite this, compliance with hand hygiene protocols by acute care providers in BC is currently about 71%.⁴



Guidelines

There are many moments where hand hygiene should be performed but the most essential are before and after each contact with the patient or patient environment.

How?

Hand hygiene generally refers to any action of hand cleansing, e.g. hand washing or using alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR).

Alcohol-based hand rubs (ABHR) are the preferred method of hand hygiene in healthcare unless hands are visibly soiled. Rub hands until the product is completely dry; this will take at least 15-20 seconds if sufficient product is used.

If hands are visibly soiled, wash hands with warm (not hot), running water, soap and friction for at least 30 seconds.

For adequate hand hygiene, **remove all hand and wrist jewelry** or keep it out of the way prior to washing or rubbing. Some rings have been shown to increase the number of microorganisms on hands and increase the risk of tears in gloves.

When dealing with spore-forming bacteria (e.g. *Clostridium difficile*) hand washing is preferred as ABHRs have limited effectiveness in killing spores. If a handwashing sink is not readily available use ABHR then wash your hands as soon as possible.

If **isolation precautions** are in place, always adhere to the hand hygiene directions appropriate to those precautions. ABHR should be used unless precautions specify otherwise.

The **use of gloves is not a substitute** for hand hygiene. Hand hygiene must be performed before and after using gloves.

¹Gravel D, Taylor G, Ofner M, et al (2007). Point prevalence survey for healthcare-associated infections within Canadian adult acute-care hospitals. *Journal of Hospital Infection* 66: 243-248

²Zoutman DE, Ford BD, Bryce B, et al (2003). The state of infection surveillance and control in Canadian acute care hospitals. *American Journal of Infect Control* 31:266-73

³Canadian Committee on Antibiotic Resistance (2007) Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Long Term Care, Home and Community Care including Health Care Offices and Ambulatory Clinics.
<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/amr-ram/ipcbp-pepci/index-eng.php>. Accessed on November 24, 2011

⁴ Reported by BC health authorities in first fiscal quarter 2011/2012.

Measures

The measure for hand hygiene is the percentage of **healthcare provider compliance** with appropriate hand hygiene practice.

The percentage is the number of compliant hand hygiene opportunities before and after contact with the patient or patient environment, divided by the number of total hand hygiene opportunities before and after contact with the patient or patient environment.

$$\% = \text{compliant opportunities} / \text{total opportunities}$$

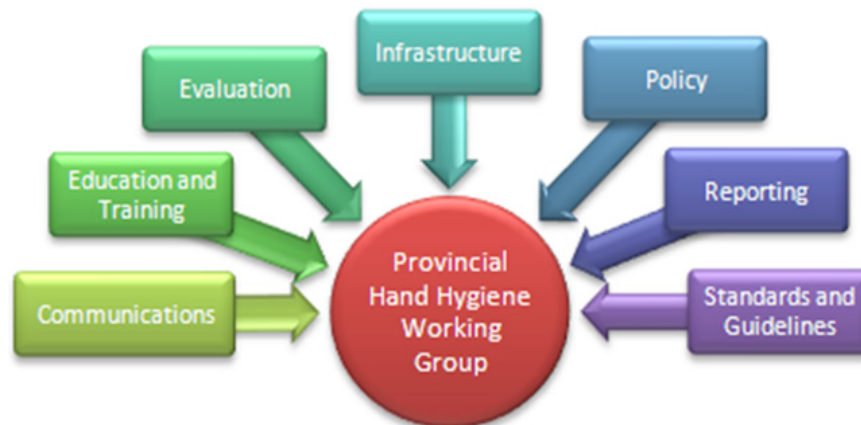
Implementation Structure

Support will be provided from the Provincial Hand Hygiene Working Group to improve care across seven areas:

- **Policy:** Develop a provincial hand hygiene policy, for issue by the BC Ministry of Health
- **Guidelines:** Create provincial hand hygiene standards and guidelines
- **Infrastructure:** Develop a provincial action plan and local action plans to improve hand hygiene infrastructures
- **Reporting:** Prepare a provincial hand hygiene report
- **Evaluation:** Review hand hygiene audit tools and determine minimum standards
- **Education:** Develop educational resources for patients, residents and clients
- **Communication:** Create materials to promote hand hygiene and to support the provincial plan

Implementation Support

This is a collaborative effort with the Ministry of Health, BC Health Authorities, BC Patient Safety & Quality Council, and PICNet.



Resources

The following resources are available to help you increase proper hand hygiene within your facility, and reduce serious infection.

- **CHICA-Canada**
- **Safer Healthcare Now! Canada's Hand Hygiene Challenge**
- **World Health Organization (WHO) Guidelines on Hand Hygiene**

BC Patient Safety & Quality Council Contacts

Dr. Elizabeth Bryce, Clinical Lead
BC Patient Safety & Quality Council
Elizabeth.Bryce@vch.ca
604.875.4111 ex 54759

Katie Procter, Quality Leader
BC Patient Safety & Quality Council
kprocter@bcpsqc.ca
604.668.8212

Ministry of Health Contact

Heather A. Davidson
Ministry of Health
heather.a.davidson@gov.bc.ca
250.952.3540