



PROCEDURE CHECKLIST

Hand hygiene

Decontamination of the hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water at the right moments of care, to prevent healthcare-associated infection and cross-transmission.



EM Orbit

Patient reference

Date

Time

Completed by

Equipment ready

- ☐ Alcohol-based hand rub (at point of care)
- ☐ Liquid soap, warm running water and a clinical sink with elbow or sensor taps
- ☐ Disposable paper towels and a foot-operated or hands-free bin
- ☐ Emollient hand cream for skin care
- ☐ Waterproof dressing for any cuts or abrasions

Before · Bare below the elbows

- ☐ Wear short sleeves or roll sleeves above the elbows.
- ☐ Remove wristwatches, bracelets and rings (a single plain band is usually permitted by local policy).
- ☐ Keep nails short and clean; no nail varnish, false nails or extensions.
- ☐ Cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing.

Before · Choose the method

- ☐ Use alcohol-based hand rub for routine hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled.
- ☐ **Wash with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty or soiled with body fluids, after using the toilet, and when caring for patients with suspected or confirmed diarrhoea, Clostridioides difficile or norovirus.**

Alcohol does not kill spores and is less effective against some non-enveloped viruses.

- ☐ **Gloves do not replace hand hygiene.**
Perform hand hygiene before putting on and after removing gloves; change gloves and clean hands between patients and between tasks.

During · Alcohol hand rub (20–30 seconds)

- ☐ Apply a palmful of hand rub into a cupped hand, enough to cover all surfaces.
- ☐ Rub palm to palm.
- ☐ Right palm over the back of the left hand with fingers interlaced, and vice versa.

- ☐ Palm to palm with fingers interlaced.
- ☐ Backs of the fingers to the opposing palm with fingers interlocked.
- ☐ Rotational rubbing of the left thumb clasped in the right palm, and vice versa.
- ☐ Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards, with clasped fingers of the right hand in the left palm, and vice versa.
- ☐ Continue until the hands are completely dry; do not wipe off.

During · Soap and water (40–60 seconds)

- ☐ Wet the hands with water.
- ☐ Apply enough liquid soap to cover all hand surfaces.
- ☐ Perform the same six rubbing steps as for hand rub, including thumbs, fingertips and wrists.
- ☐ Rinse the hands thoroughly under running water.
- ☐ Dry thoroughly with a single-use paper towel.
- ☐ Use the towel (or elbow) to turn off a hand-operated tap.
- ☐ Discard the towel into a foot-operated or hands-free bin.

After · Skin care and practice

- ☐ Apply emollient hand cream regularly (not at the point of care between patients) to protect the skin.
- ☐ Report persistent skin irritation or dermatitis to occupational health.
- ☐ Perform hand hygiene at the point of care, where the patient is — not only at the sink or door.

After · Culture and audit

- ☐ Remind colleagues, including senior staff, when a moment is missed; patients and visitors may also ask staff to clean their hands.
- ☐ Take part in local hand hygiene audits and act on feedback.



A drafted procedure checklist, awaiting senior review. Perform procedures only within your training, competence and local policy. It does not replace your clinical judgement.

EM Orbit · Emergency medicine, in one orbit · proc-hand-hygiene · red rows are the steps that must not be missed