

Action saves lives

WORLD HAND HYGIENE DAY

5 MAY 2026

Veterinary



WHY WASH HANDS?

- About 80% of infectious diseases are transmitted by unclean hands touching contaminated surfaces
- Organisms left on surfaces can survive for minutes, hours, days and even weeks
- Organisms multiply! A single bacterium can multiply into more than 16 million in 8 hours
- Hands encounter around 10 million organisms per day
- Humans have approx. 1,500 bacteria living on each square centimetre of skin on their hands. Underneath fingernails and between fingers can harbour even more
- People touch their face on average 23 times an hour, risking infection transmission to eyes, nose and mouth
- Research shows that if everyone routinely washed their hands, a million deaths a year could be prevented
- The most common microbial contaminants from hands in health care include skin commensals and pathogens - MRSA and E.coli in dogs and cats, Salmonella spp. and Rhodococcus equi in horses
- Unclean surfaces can harbour millions of organisms. Portable medical equipment is a significant source of transmission, as are computer keyboards. Mobile phones are a hazardous microbial platform, housing bacteria, fungi, protists, viruses and bacteriophages

HOW TO HAND WASH

(when soiled or risk of parvovirus, FCV or spores)

1. **WET** hands with running water
2. **SOAP** your hands and lather up
3. **RUB** all over your hands, between your fingers and thumbs for 20 seconds
4. **RINSE** hands under running water
5. **DRY** hands using paper towel

HOW TO HAND RUB

1. Apply one full pump of ABHR to your palm
2. Cover all surfaces of the hands
3. Perform rotational rubbing of fingertips in the palm of the other hand
4. Rotational rubbing of both thumbs
5. Rub hands until dry

WHEN

(when hands are visibly clean)

BEFORE

- Entering or leaving a veterinary care facility, clinic, farm or animal environment (companion/production)
- Touching an animal
- Handling medicines
- Preparing/eating food
- Touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Donning gloves

AFTER

- Removing gloves
- Blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- Going to the toilet
- Touching clients, animals and pets including therapy animals
- Touching an animal cage/enclosure



5



THE 5 MOMENTS

1. **BEFORE** touching an animal
2. **BEFORE** a procedure
3. **AFTER** a procedure (or body fluid exposure)
4. **AFTER** touching an animal
5. **AFTER** touching an animal's cage/enclosure



ACIPC
Australasian College
for Infection Prevention and Control