

NQF Safe Practice #19: Hand Hygiene

NQF# Not NQF Endorsed

Developer: The Leapfrog Group

Data Source: Leapfrog Hospital Survey

Practice Statement: Comply with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hand Hygiene Guidelines.

Rationale: Many healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) are caused by pathogens transmitted from one patient to another via the contaminated hands of health care workers. The CDC estimates that approximately 2 million patients acquire an HAI, and nearly 90,000 patients die as a result, annually. Hand hygiene is one of the most important and effective interventions in preventing the transmission of pathogens in health care facilities. However, a compliance rate of less than 50% was observed in studies. Proper hand hygiene greatly improves the preventability of many HAIs.

Evidence for Rationale:

- CDC Media Relations. Hand Hygiene in Health Care Settings: CDC Releases new hand-hygiene guidelines. Press release. Atlanta (CA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2002 Oct 25.
- Denham CR. A growing national chorus: the 2009 Safe Practices for Better Healthcare. J Patient Saf 2008 Dec; 4(4):253-60.
- Hand Hygiene. IHI Improvement Map. Cambridge (MA): Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2009.
- Klevens RM, Edwards JR, Richards CL Jr, et al. Estimating health care associated infections and deaths in U.S. hospitals, 2002. Public Health Rep. 2007 Mar-Apr; 122(2):160-6.
- Pittet D, Mourougou P, Perneger TV. Compliance with handwashing in a teaching hospital. Ann Intern Med 1999 Jan; 130(2):126-30.
- Whitby M, Pessaa-Silva CL, McLaws ML, et al. Behavioral considerations for hand hygiene practices: The basic building blocks. Hosp Infect 2007 Jan;65(1):1-8.

Impact:

- Affects large number of patients.

Opportunity:

- Opportunity for improvement exists, based on the coefficient of variation for the measure.

Evidence:

- Supported by experimental and clinical studies and strong theoretical rationale.

Citations for Evidence:

- Guideline for hand hygiene in health-care settings: Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee and the HIC-PAC/SHEA/APIC/IDSA Hand Hygiene Task Force. Atlanta (GA): Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2002. MMWR 2002; 51(RR-16):1-45.
- National Quality Forum (NQF). Safe practices for better healthcare—2010 update: A consensus report. Washington (DC): National Quality Forum (NQF); 2010.

[NQF Safe practices for better healthcare-2010 update: A consensus report](#)