



# HAND & GENERAL CLINICAL HYGIENE POLICY

(Version 1.1)

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**INDEX**

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- 1. AIM**
  
- 2. INTRODUCTION**
  
- 3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY**
  
- 4. EQUIPMENT**
  
- 5. HAZARDS and SAFETY**
  
- 6. PROCEDURE / SYSEMS IN PLACE**
  
- 7. IMPORTANCE OF HAND HYGIENE IN REGARD TO COVID - 19**
  
- 8. QUALITY CONTROL and AUDIT**

**1. AIM**

Hand and general hygiene in the healthcare setting reduces the transmission of pathogens and the incidence of healthcare-associated infections, improving hand and general hygiene in the clinical setting is the aim of this policy.

The content of this policy is aimed to establish a local policy tailored for our service but underpinned by the NHS;

***'Standard infection control precautions: national hand hygiene and personal protective equipment policy'*** (March 2019)

**2. INTRODUCTION**

Contaminated hands and incorrect clothing including jewellery and poor nail cleanliness are closely associated with the transmission of infection. Correct hand hygiene is considered to be the single most important practice in reducing healthcare associated Infections (HCAI).

The importance of correct hygiene policies and procedures are best outlined in; *The Health and Social Care Act 2008; Code of Practice for the NHS* on the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections and related guidance as well as the above mentioned NHS standard specifically related to hand hygiene and PPE Code of Practice for the *Prevention and Control of Health Care Associated Infections* states that an NHS body must ensure that;

*"patients, staff and other persons are protected against risks of acquiring healthcare associated infections, through the provision of appropriate care, in suitable facilities, consistent with good clinical practice."*

**3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITY**

All staff employed by H.E.M. clinical ultrasound service LTD are responsible for adhering to the local hygiene policies related to their specific work environment. It is also the responsibility of all the senior team to monitor, audit and educate staff in all aspects of hygiene, especially within the clinical scan room environment. All staff will also be made aware of the NHS standards detailed in the above named NHS policy and be asked to read the NHS policy along with this local policy.

**4. EQUIPMENT**

PPE (personal protective equipment)

- Disposable gloves
- Aprons

**Other equipment:**

- Hand wash
- Wash basin
- Hands free taps
- Disposable hand towels
- Clinell wipes
- Alcohol wipes



## 5. HAZARDS AND SAFETY

Although clinical ultrasound services are by their nature a low risk for infection as patient/clinician contact is minimal, there is always a real risk of cross contamination as in any clinical environment.

Hazards of cross contamination and infection are still very relevant even in this perceived low risk clinical environment

The safety of both clinicians, clinical assistants, patients and carers/relatives must form part of the company's policies and procedures and these policies and procedures must be adhered to by all staff and must be monitored via audits on a regular basis. Staff must first have the correct training and guidance to ensure standards are met that ensure continued high standards of hygiene are met and maintained.

## 6. PROCEDURE / SYSEMS IN PLACE

### General rules

- No watches, rings (barring wedding rings) or bracelets to be worn in a clinical environment
- No clothing to be worn that falls below the upper elbow
- No nail varnish or false nails to be worn
- Nail length to be level with top of fingers and nails to be kept clean

### General non-invasive ultrasound scan hygiene procedure

**The Sonographer** must wash hands before each scan;

- When turning taps on for all scan types always use your elbows and not your hands on the tap controls
- Hands must be washed thoroughly as per guidelines placed above hand basins prior to every scan (this can be after the last scan and utilise the hand rub prior to the next scan to avoid double washing and an increased dermatitis risk).
- For all Abdominal and renal scans all sonographers must also **wash up to each elbow** as there is a risk that during the scan they may be required to rest their arm up to the elbow over the patients abdomen to achieve images of the left upper quadrant and this constitutes an infection risk.
- Always wear gloves on the hand you hold the probe in
- Always wipe probes after the scan before removing the glove
- Always wash hands after the scan and before touching computer to write report
- **The clinic assistant** must always wash their hands following above guidelines as for sonographers prior to placing gloves on to wipe the probes and cables down after each scan
- An antibacterial moisturiser needs to be used when appropriate to aid against dermatitis through hand washing. Available in the scan room.

### Intimate TV (Trans vaginal) scan hygiene procedure – sonographer

- When turning taps on for all scan types always use your elbows and not your hands on the tap controls
- Hands must be washed thoroughly as per guidelines placed above hand basins prior to every scan
- Always put two gloves on prior to placing the probe cover on the probe, **the sonographer only must always be responsible for putting the probe cover on.**

- Always remove protective outer probe cover once patient is positioned on the couch, this enables the patient to see that the probe is correctly protected and the outer cover is only removed just prior to the scan.
  - Always tell the patient that the probe has a protective cover and that the scan gel used is sterile and one use only before inserting probe
  - Once the scan has finished and the probe is taken out, the sonographer must always check to probe cover for any breakages, and this must be documented in the TV scan check sheet and signed by the sonographer stating probe cover was intact at end of scan
- Clinic assistant** at the end of each TV scan must wash their hands as per policy and then place gloves on prior to following TV probe cleaning protocols and ensure cleaning check sheet is completed for every TV scan.

### **Scanning patients with open wounds**

Occasionally we are asked to scan for post-operative collections, this does require the sonographer to alter the procedure for scanning. Only scan patients that have a visibly intact and secure wound dressings, if a patient attends with an open wound that is not covered with a secure dressing or has a dressing that is soiled or not intact, abandon scan immediately and contact referrer to explain why scan was abandoned ;

Procedure for query wound collections:

Sonographers must follow the procedure outlined above for hand hygiene and:

- Only use sterile gel for direct skin contact for this type of procedure, never place gel over or close to any open wound dressing
- Always cover the probe with a glove with non-sterile scan gel placed inside glove to allow for acoustic coupling
- Never place probe directly over open wound dressing but scan to the side away from wound and dressing to gain images of soft tissue below wound

If unable to gain diagnostic images via indirect placement of probe away from open wound, always abandon scan and suggest specialist imaging keeping away from dressing.

Sonographer and clinic assistant should then follow cleaning protocol as per TV scan for probes and cables.

## **7. IMPORTANCE OF HAND HYGIENE IN REGARD TO COVID - 19**

Handwashing is key to preventing coronavirus. Frequent, thorough handwashing with soap and water is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and is the first line of defence against COVID-19. Like a cold, coronavirus is spread through droplets from a person coughing or sneezing, and via contaminated surfaces. Good hygiene is key to avoiding spreading it – and catching it.

In the context of COVID-19 prevention, as well as following the guidelines found in this policy, you should make sure to wash your hands at the following times:

- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After visiting a public space, including public transportation, markets and places of worship.
- After touching surfaces outside of the home, including money.
- Before and after caring for a sick person.
- Before and after eating.

## Coronavirus

**Wash your hands with soap and water more often for 20 seconds**



Palm to palm



The backs of hands



In between the fingers



The back of the fingers



The thumbs



The tips of the fingers

Use a tissue to turn off the tap.  
Dry hands thoroughly.



**The Image demonstrates how to effectively wash your hands to prevent the spread of COVID-19.**

### **8. QUALITY CONTROL and AUDIT**

Monthly random audits will be carried out observing both sonographers and clinic assistant's compliance with hygiene policies. The policy will be amended annually or sooner if required.

