



## Canada's Hand Hygiene Challenge

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is a healthcare associated infection?

- An infection that develops in hospital by a patient who was admitted for a reason other than that infection.
- The infection was not present or incubating at the time of the admission
- This includes infections that develop in the hospital but appear after the person is discharged
- This also includes occupational infections among staff who work at the facility <sup>1</sup>

#### How can I help to protect myself or my loved one against developing a healthcare associated infection?

- You can pay attention to the hand hygiene practices of the healthcare professionals who participate in your care or the care of your loved one. If you feel comfortable doing so, please remind healthcare workers to clean their hands if they have not done so.
- You can pay attention to the cleanliness of your room
- You can participate in the delivery of your healthcare and to speak up if you have questions
- Make sure you know who is actively involved in your care or the care of your loved one.

#### What is best, hand washing or hand rubbing with alcohol based hand rubs?

- It depends on the situation. If your hands are visibly dirty or they feel dirty, wash them thoroughly with soap and water. Instructions for how to hand wash and how to hand rub are available in this guide
- In any other case, using an alcohol based hand rub is an excellent way to keep from transmitting infection or getting one yourself.
- In general, alcohol based hand rub is considered to be better than soap and water and removing bacteria off your hands.

1. WHO: Prevention of Hospital Acquired Infections: A Practical Guide:  
<http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/drugresist/en/whocdscsreph200212.pdf>