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aux soins
communautaires
du Sud-Ouest

Infection Control It's in your hands

What is the Campaign?

In support of Canada's Hand Hygiene Campaign, The Southwest Community Care Access Centre (SWCCAC) and its contracted service providers, in collaboration with the South Western Ontario Infection Control Network (SWOICN), is launching a community-care hand hygiene campaign. The campaign is entitled "Infection Control... it's in your hands." It is designed to create increased awareness about the importance of hand hygiene in the prevention of transmission of infective agents in community care. To increase client and caregiver awareness of hand hygiene and to engage them in discussions about the importance of effective hand hygiene, buttons that display the question: "Ask me if I washed my hands?" and hand hygiene fact sheets have been created for distribution.

Why is it important?

Hand Hygiene refers to removing or killing germs on the hands. Correctly performed, hand hygiene is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and infections, such as influenza. Hand Hygiene is performed by using soap and running water or with alcohol-based hand rubs. Clients and caregivers work together as partners in care delivery to close the gap on this important client safety issue. Experts in Infection Prevention and Control agree that while hand hygiene improvement efforts are underway in various regions and provinces, a national strategy is essential to achieve consistent, reproducible, and measurable improvements across the county (Canadian Patient Safety Institute, Stop! Clean Your Hands Campaign, 2006).

What's the client's role?

As a partner in care, clients will participate in the Hand Hygiene campaign by undertaking the following activities:

- Be a partner in your care. Protect yourself and ask your caregiver if they have washed their hands. There is no doubt that cleaner hands are safer hands.
- Take responsibility to wash your own hands, if you are involved in assisting with your care or if you are taking on the responsibilities for self-care.
- Be familiar with the Hand Hygiene Fact sheet on appropriate use of alcohol based hand rubs and proper techniques for hand washing with soap and running water.

What's the Caregivers' role?

As a partner in care, caregivers will participate in the Hand Hygiene campaign by undertaking the following activities:

- Consistently wear the campaign button in a visible place.
- Review the campaign on the importance of hand hygiene, and invite clients to ask as often as they would like, the question: "Have you washed your hands?"
- Send reinforcing messages to clients regarding hand hygiene and prevention of transmission of germs to prevent influenza transmission.
- Make hand hygiene visible for clients.
- Use alcohol based hand rubs, as the preferred method for decontaminating hands, provided they contain 60% alcohol (CHICHA-CANADA, Hand Hygiene Resources, 2008)
- Initiate Hand Hygiene:
 - before client contact
 - before an aseptic task
 - after body fluid exposure risk
 - after client contact
 - after contact with the client's surroundings, such as linen, mobility aids, IV pumps, and RITH)
- Refer clients to the internet links below, the local Public Health Unit, or your Manager/Supervisor if they have hand hygiene or H1N1 questions beyond your personal scope of practice.

How do I get more information?

To obtain more information on hand hygiene, please access the following web sites:

www.thehealthline.ca

- Carries information from a number of Public Health Units from across the South West Local Health Integration Network geography.

www.chica.org/links_handhygiene.html

- Carries information about hand hygiene developed by the Community and Hospital Infection Control Association (CHICA).

www.handhygiene.ca/about.aspx

- Carries information about the National: STOP! Clean Your Hands! Campaign.

Note: If you do not have access to the internet, then please contact the Public Health Unit in your area or your CCAC Case Manager.