



Department of Health

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Executive Deputy Commissioner

June 17, 2025

DAL: DACF 25-23

Subject: Hand Hygiene as an Effective
Infection Prevention and Control
Practice

Dear Adult Care Facility Administrator:

Effective infection prevention and control practices result in better care by lowering infection rates and lowering healthcare costs. One of the best methods for preventing the spread of illness is effective hand hygiene. Effective hand hygiene includes hand sanitizing with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60-90% alcohol or hand washing with soap and water for 20 seconds. Frequent hand hygiene either using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or soap and water are crucial for preventing the spread of the fungal infection, *Candida auris*. Although hand sanitizing is the preferred method of hand hygiene in healthcare settings, it is not as effective as hand washing in preventing the spread of *Clostridioides difficile* ("C. diff.") and norovirus. Hand washing should be performed during the care of persons with suspected or confirmed infection during outbreaks of *Clostridioides difficile* ("C. diff.") and norovirus. In addition, hand washing should be performed when hands are visibly soiled, before eating, and after using the restroom. Hand washing facilities should be readily available for staff to wash hands with soap and water.

Hand hygiene meets the expectation of those we serve. The public knows that using effective hand hygiene prevents the spread of harmful diseases and expects that facility staff adhere to this most fundamental of expectations. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has created thorough guidance that details infection prevention and control strategies, including hand hygiene, to contain and prevent the spread of communicable diseases in health care facilities which may be appropriate for consideration in New York State licensed adult care facilities.

In New York State, hand hygiene surveillance focuses on monitoring compliance with best practices to prevent the spread of infections. All Administrators must:

- Immediately ensure that effective hand hygiene is practiced wherever healthcare is delivered, by every health care provider, before and after they touch a patient.
- Review the CDC guidance at <https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/hcp/clinical-safety/index.html> to evaluate additional infection prevention and control practices that can prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Encourage the use of these strategies amongst staff.

For questions, please contact the Division of Adult Care Facility and Assisted Living Surveillance by email at acinfo@health.ny.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Ann Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

KellyAnn Anderson, Director
Division of Adult Care Facility
and Assisted Living Surveillance

cc: Dr. Fish
V. Deetz
C. Rodat
H. Hayes
K. Walker