

Prevent Spread of Germs

Stay Germ Free: How to Stop the Spread of Germs While You are in the Hospital

You play an important role in preventing the spread of germs throughout our hospital.

You can be confident that all of us at Roswell Park are dedicated to practicing good hand hygiene and are working hard to prevent the spread of germs and infection. But to truly win the fight, we need your help.

Washing or sanitizing your hands is one way to prevent spreading germs. Here are some tips to keep you healthy and germ free:

- Always wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer product after you cough, sneeze, blow your nose, after using the toilet or touching food trays, cups, the telephone, or the remote control. If your hands are visibly soiled, use a wipe or wash with soap/water if available.
- Try not to rub your eyes or put your fingers in your mouth or nose since germs usually enter your body through these areas.
- As soon as visitors enter your room, ask them to wash or sanitize their hands. Don't worry that they will be insulted. Your family has your best interests in mind, and they will be glad to do it.
- Remind our staff to wash or sanitize their hands when they enter your room. Our staff – including doctors, nurses, medical technicians, housekeeping, and food service workers – work hard to prevent infections and keep you safe, so they expect you to ask them whether they have washed or sanitized their hands.

Washing Your Hands

- It is recommended that you wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. A good way to remember is to sing "Happy Birthday" twice while you are washing your hands.
- Work the lather onto the back of your hands and between your fingers.
- Work soap under your nails since this is a big hiding place for germs.
- Don't forget your thumbs! Many people leave their thumbs out when they are washing their hands.

While soap and water washing is a great way to keep hands clean and prevent the spread of germs, a sink is not always available. Alcohol based hand sanitizer products are effective in preventing the spread of germs. There are hand sanitizers throughout our hospital in convenient locations for staff, patients, friends, and family.

Using a Hand Sanitizer

If soap and water are unavailable, you can use an alcohol based hand sanitizer. Roswell Park has installed hand sanitizers inside every consultation room and every inpatient room for your convenience.

Follow these directions:

- Put a thumbnail size of sanitizer into the palm of your hand and rub hands together for at least 15 seconds or until dry.
- Don't forget to pay attention to the back of your hands, wrists, between your fingers, and thumbs. Attack the germs where they hide!

Using a Hand Sanitizing Wipe

When a sink to wash with soap and water is unavailable or you are not feeling steady on your feet but need to clean AND sanitize your hands, you can use a hand sanitizing wipe(s).

- If your hands are soiled, you may need more than 1 wipe to clean and sanitize your hands.
- Unfold each towelette, wipe hands completely and discard after use.
- Important: DO NOT FLUSH the wipes but dispose of in the proper receptacle.
- Make sure you close the packet tightly after use, to avoid the wipes from drying out.

*Remember, if you need to perform hand hygiene but are not feeling well enough to get up, please **CALL** your healthcare provider so you **DON'T FALL**.*