

Effective hand washing for homecare workers

Hand washing is vital to reduce the spread of infection between careworkers and service users. Hands should be washed:

1. On arrival in a service user's home, after removing jewellery from the hands and wrists and before putting on latex gloves (or other well-fitting procedure gloves);

2. After removing and disposing of gloves and following any contact with faeces or body fluids such as urine, blood, sweat or secretions from the nose or mouth;

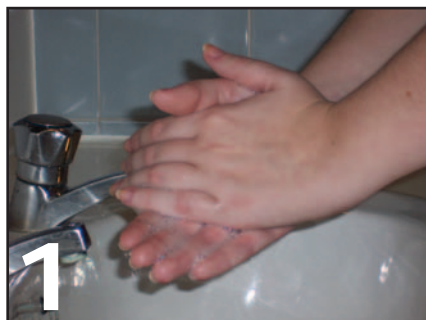
3. Before leaving the service user's home.

Hands should be washed thoroughly using a squirt of a neutral detergent hand wash (or a clean bar of soap if handwash isn't available). The water should be warm and comfortable to the touch, rather than hot.

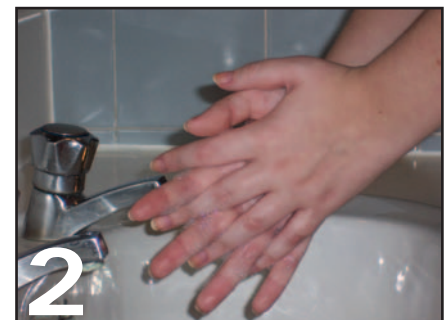
Hand washing should be performed carefully, but avoid rubbing the hands so vigorously that they become tender with repeated washing. Do not use a nail brush as this can damage the skin and harbour bacteria.

The following six diagrams show the correct way to wash your hands. Pay special attention to the tips of fingers, the thumbs and the palms of the hands: Tests have shown that these are the areas where bacteria are hardest to remove.

Some people find that applying an unscented hand cream after the last hand wash at each service user's home reduces the risk of their hands becoming dry. Hand creams should be for personal use only, rather than from tube or container used by several people. When outside in cold weather it is also a good idea to wear some well-fitting gloves.



Wet hands with warm water and use handwash to build up a lather. Wash the hands and wrists.



Wash the hands with palms facing and remembering to wash between the fingers of both hands.



Wash the backs of both hands, again remembering to wash between each of the fingers.



Link the fingers of one hand with the other and continue to wash.



Wash the thumbs of each hand thoroughly using one hand to wash the opposite thumb.



Finally, wash the palms of each hand as this is an area often neglected. The hands are then rinsed thoroughly and dried on disposable paper towels (or a clean hand towel).

Pandemic Flu: Swine Influenza Publications and Contacts



Pandemic Influenza Guidance for Homecare Providers

The outbreak of a new strain of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus has caused concern about a large-scale outbreak of influenza among humans. With the World Health Organisation raising its alert level to Phase 5, homecare providers need to prepare for a possible pandemic.



UKHCA has produced free guidance for homecare providers to help with contingency planning.

We encourage all providers to familiarise themselves with the guidance, which is updated regularly to reflect emerging information on swine flu and contains practical advice on business planning.

- Free to all from:
www.ukhca.co.uk/downloads.aspx?id=119

Infection Control 'Train the Trainer' Programme

This pack is designed to help you raise awareness of the causes of infection, how it spreads and what can be done to prevent or reduce infection. The programme follows the Skills for Care Infection Control Knowledge Set and has been designed to help you run your own in-house infection control programme training.



Included in the pack are the training guide, written exercises, overhead projector slides, glossary, frequently asked questions on the UKHCA Helpline, and a CD with electronic versions of the materials.

- UKHCA members £28.75 each
- Non-members £53.75 each

Prices include postage and packing

Information on Swine Flu

UK-wide

Pre-recorded UK swine flu information line on 0800 1513 513

Swine Flu toolkit, leaflets and editable posters:
www.dh.gov.uk/en/PublicHealth/Flu/Swineflu/DH_098802

England

NHS direct England - 0845 46 47
www.nhs.uk/news/2009/04April/Pages/Swineflulatest.aspx

NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk

Department of Health information for health and social care staff - www.dh.gov.uk

Scotland

NHS 24 Scotland - 08454 242424
www.nhs24.com/content

Regular updates:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/AvianInfluenza/mexicanswiuneflu

Wales

NHS direct Wales: 0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland NHS helpline - 0800 0514 142
www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/health-and-well-being/swine-flu.htm

Local contacts

Contact your local council(s) or trust to ensure you are included in communications about local arrangements in the event that the flu outbreak becomes a pandemic.

Are you receiving our e-mail alerts?

UKHCA is sending out regular e-mail alerts to members. If you are not receiving our alerts, contact 020 8288 5291 or e-mail policy@ukhca.co.uk for help.