

## 9 Myths About Hand Hygiene

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### **Myth #1: Washing your hands with soap and water will kill germs.**

Hand washing with plain soap and water does not result in pathogen destruction.

Source: <http://www.handwashingforlife.com/files/HandwashWaterv2.doc>

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### **Myth #2: The use of any soap is better than plain water in hand washing.**

Soap isn't designed to kill bacteria. It acts as a surfactant to lift dirt off of surfaces so it can be rinsed away.

Source: [http://www.sciencedaily.com/videos/2005/1212-fighting\\_cold\\_and\\_flu\\_germs.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/videos/2005/1212-fighting_cold_and_flu_germs.htm)

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### **Myth #3: Hot water is better than cold water for effective hand washing.**

Scientists with the Joint Bank Group/Fund Health Services Department pointed out that various temperatures had "no effect on transient or resident bacterial reduction." They found no evidence that hot water had any benefit, and noted that it might increase the "irritant capacity" of some soaps, causing contact dermatitis.

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/13/health/13real.html>

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### **Myth #4: Hand sanitizers kill germs more effectively than soap.**

The efficacy of alcohol-based hand-hygiene products is affected by several factors, including the type of alcohol used, concentration of alcohol, contact time, volume of alcohol used and whether the hands are wet when the alcohol is applied. Applying small volumes (i.e., 0.2-0.5 mL) of alcohol to the hands is not more effective than washing hands with plain soap and water.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5116a1.htm>

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### **Myth #5: Frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizers promotes healthy skin.**

Occupationally related contact dermatitis can develop from frequent and repeated use of hand hygiene products, exposure to chemicals and glove use.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5217a1.htm>

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**Myth #6: Wearing gloves replaces hand washing.**

Wearing gloves does not eliminate the need for handwashing. Hand hygiene should be performed immediately before donning gloves. Gloves can have unapparent defects or can be torn during use, and hands can become contaminated during glove removal. In addition, bacteria can multiply rapidly in the moist environments underneath gloves.

Source: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5217a1.htm>

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**Myth #7: Wearing gloves ensures prevention of spread of infection.**

When employees touch the handles on refrigerator doors, handles on display cases, buttons on scales, knife handles, etc., it makes no difference if they wear gloves or not. Cross-contamination occurs from one surface to another, but probably at a tolerable level.

Source: <http://www.hi-tm.com/Documents2001/Glove-problems.html>

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**Myth #8. Alcohol gels are an effective means to reduce infection.**

Alcohols have very poor activity against bacterial spores, protozoan oocysts and certain nonenveloped (nonlipophilic) viruses.

Source:

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/RetailFoodProtection/IndustryandRegulatoryAssistanceandTrainingResources/ucm135577.htm>

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**Myth #9: Soap with triclosan is an effective antimicrobial for hand washing.**

A recent study compared an antibacterial soap containing triclosan with a non-antibacterial soap and concluded that the former did not provide any additional benefit. Concerns have been raised about the use of triclosan, because of the development of bacterial resistance to low concentrations of biocide and cross-resistance to some antibiotics.

Source: [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241597906\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241597906_eng.pdf)

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SEE ORIGINAL ARTICLE HERE:

<http://www.beckersasc.com/quality-infection-control/9-myths-about-hand-hygiene.html>

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