

# WHO SAVE LIVES: CLEAN YOUR HANDS IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

## Hand Hygiene in the Community

**You can play a critical part in fighting COVID-19**

- **Hands** have a crucial role in the transmission of COVID-19.
- COVID-19 virus primarily spreads through droplet and contact transmission. Contact transmission means by touching infected people and/or contaminated objects or surfaces. Thus, your hands can spread virus to other surfaces and/or to your mouth, nose or eyes if you touch them.



## Why is Hand Hygiene so important in preventing infections, including COVID-19?

- **Hand Hygiene** is the single most effective action you can take to reduce the spread of pathogens and prevent infections, including the COVID-19 virus.
- Community members can play a critical role in fighting COVID-19 by adopting frequent hand hygiene as part of their day-to-day practices.

### Wash your hands

Wash your hands with soap and running water when hands are visibly dirty



If your hands are not visibly dirty, frequently clean them by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water



Join the **#SAFEHANDS challenge** now and save lives! Post a video or picture of yourself washing your hands and tag **#SAFEHANDS**

WHO **calls** upon **policy makers** to provide

- the necessary infrastructure to allow people to effectively perform hand hygiene in public places;
- to support hand hygiene supplies and best practices in health care facilities.

Protect yourself and others from getting sick

### Wash your hands

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste



## Hand Hygiene in Health Care

### Why is it important to participate in the WHO global hand hygiene campaign for the fight against COVID-19?

- The WHO global hand hygiene campaign **SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands** mobilizes people around the world to increase adherence to hand hygiene in health care facilities, thus protecting health care workers and patient from COVID-19 and other pathogens.
- **Nurses** and other health care workers are the front-line heroes saving lives from COVID-19. In alignment with the **Year of the Nurse and the Midwife**, the **global hand hygiene campaign 2020** recognizes their critical role in the prevention of infections.
- The campaign also contributes to the **United Nations Secretary's General's Global Call to Action on WASH** in health care facilities.



NURSES AND MIDWIVES

**CLEAN CARE**  
IS IN YOUR  
**HANDS**

Follow the 5 May 2020 **SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands** here: <https://www.who.int/infection-prevention/campaigns/clean-hands/en/>

**SAVE LIVES**  
**CLEAN YOUR HANDS**

**#safehands #handhygiene #infectionprevention**

## What about 5 May 2020 and how can it be linked to the fight against COVID-19?

- Among several COVID-19 initiatives promoting hand hygiene, the **WHO SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands (SLCYH)** global campaign focuses on **hand hygiene in health care** and is celebrated on 5 May every year.
- The **DG call** to Member States to improve access to hand hygiene worldwide is linked to the SLCYH campaign.
- On 5 May 2020, the WHO **SLCYH campaign** highlights the critical role of nurses and midwives in infection prevention and hand hygiene practices, to protect all patients. The slogan is **"Nurses and Midwives, clean care is in your hands!"**
- Everyone has a role in supporting health care workers in hand hygiene best practices at this critical time.
- Each one of the calls to action can be adapted to the COVID-19 context:

- **Nurses:** "Clean and safe care starts with you."
- **Midwives:** "Your hands make all the difference for mothers and babies."
- **Policy Makers:** "Increase nurse staffing levels to prevent infections and improve quality of care. Create the means to empower nurses and midwives."
- **IPC Leaders:** "Empower nurses and midwives in providing clean care."
- **Patients and Families:** "Safer care for you, with you."

- **Register** in the WHO SLCYH campaign and celebrate ahead of and on **5 May 2020!**

## What do you need to know on hand hygiene best practices for COVID?

### HAND WASHING

- Evidence from both the SARS and COVID-19 epidemics, shows that hand hygiene is very important to protect health care workers from getting infected (Seto WH et al, "Lancet" 2003; Ran L et al, "Clin Infect Dis" 2020).
- Hand washing in the community is highly effective to prevent both diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory illness (Jefferson T, et al. "BMJ" 2008). Thus, it is one of the most important measures that can be used to prevent COVID 19 infection.

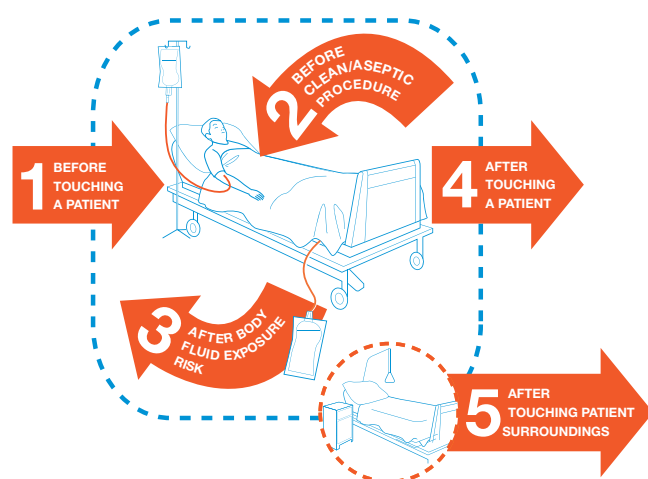
### GUIDANCE

- Alcohol-based hand rub products should contain at least 60% alcohol, should be certified and where supplies are limited or cost prohibitive can be made locally by carefully following WHO [Guide](#).
- Plain soap is effective at inactivating enveloped viruses such as the COVID-virus due to the oily surface membrane that is dissolved by soap, killing the virus (Sickbert-Bennett EE et al, "Am J Infect Control" 2005). In addition, hand washing removes germs through mechanical action (WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care 2009).
- Chlorinated water at 0.05% is not recommended for routine hand hygiene because it has skin and other toxic effects, and soap is easy to find and can be used effectively.

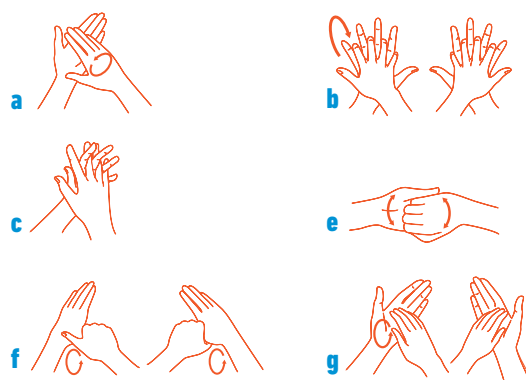
## Right time and right technique for hand hygiene in health care

Conducting hand hygiene at the right time, using the right technique, with either ABHR or soap, water and disposable/clean towels is critical.

### RIGHT TIME



### RIGHT TECHNIQUE



### RIGHT DURATION

- Alcohol based hand rub: for **20-30 seconds**
- Water and soap: for **40-60 seconds**

**SAVE LIVES  
CLEAN YOUR HANDS**

**#safehands #handhygiene #infectionprevention**