



## Hand Hygiene Information for Patients and Families

Patient safety remains the most important priority for [hospital name] and this involves ensuring that patients are not at risk for contracting healthcare-associated infections.

We have a number of practices in place to help prevent and control infections, including a comprehensive hand hygiene program. As of April 30, 2009, all Ontario hospitals are required to annually post their hand hygiene compliance rates to further promote accountability and transparency within the health system.

If you have any questions about the information below or about our hospital's infection prevention and control program, please contact Sheila Havey at 613-432-4851 ext262

### **What are health care-associated infections?**

Sometimes when patients are admitted to the hospital, they can get infections. These are called health care-associated infections.

### **How will the public reporting of hand hygiene compliance affect compliance among health care professionals?**

There are many factors that will improve hand hygiene compliance. Mandatory public reporting is one element. Certainly the increasing recent attention on the issue as well as the provincial government's multifaceted hand hygiene program called ***Just Clean Your Hands*** are important to ensuring effective hand hygiene at the right times.

### **Why is hand hygiene so important?**

Hand hygiene is an important practice for health care providers and has a significant impact on reducing the spread of infections in hospitals. Hand hygiene is a different way of thinking about safety and patient care and involves everyone in the hospital, including patients and health care providers.

Effective hand hygiene practices in hospitals play a key role in improving patient and provider safety, and in preventing the spread of health care-associated infections.

### **What Renfrew Victoria Hospital is doing to improve patient safety?**

Since September 2008 the hospital has assembled a multidisciplinary team which is implementing the tenets of the ***Just Clean Your Hands*** program model (13 month project timeline). In April 2009 when our first compliance audits were done that reflected our baseline rate. The next stage is feedback to hospital employees, supported by education, hand hygiene product trials, and dealing with the environmental barriers to performance of hand hygiene. Subsequent audits will evaluate the success of our interventions.

### **What can patients do to help improve their own safety?**

Hand hygiene involves everyone in the hospital, including patients. Hand cleaning is one of the best ways you and your health care team can prevent the spread of many infections. Patients and their visitors should also practice good hand hygiene before and after entering patient rooms.

More patient-specific information is available at [www.ontario.ca/patientsafety](http://www.ontario.ca/patientsafety) and [www.oha.com/patientsafetytips](http://www.oha.com/patientsafetytips).