

# One

## HAND HYGIENE

### WHAT IS HAND HYGIENE?

Hand hygiene refers to both hand washing with **soap and water** or cleaning hands with alcohol-based **hand sanitizers**.

### WHY CLEAN MY HANDS?

Germs can spread from hands and surfaces to people and wounds. This can cause infections.

Washing your hands is the best way to stop germs from spreading.

### WHEN SHOULD I CLEAN MY HANDS?

#### Clean your hands:

- Before cooking or eating food
- After touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Before and after changing bandages
- After using the bathroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching things like beds, tables, doorknobs or phones

### HAND SOAP OR SANITIZER?

#### Use soap and water:

- When your hands look dirty
- After you use the bathroom
- Before you cook or eat food

#### Use alcohol-based hand rub:

- When your hands do not look dirty
- If soap and water are not available

### HOW DO I WASH MY HANDS?

1. Wet your hands with running water and apply soap.
2. Rub your hands until lather forms; make sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers and under the nails.
3. Scrub hands for at least 15 seconds. (Hint: Sing "Happy Birthday" song twice.)
4. Rinse your hands under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a paper towel and use the paper towel to turn off the water and open the door.

### HOW DO I USE HAND SANITIZER?

1. Apply the product to the palm of one hand.
2. Rub the product over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry.

*\*Hand sanitizer should **never** be used for cleaning things like clothing, sheets, counters or tabletops.*

### IT IS OK TO ASK!

You can make a difference by asking your doctors, nurses and visitors to wash their hands.

Ask your healthcare provider if they washed their hands before taking care of you. Tell them that you know how easy germs can spread and cause infection.

At Carolinas HealthCare System, your safety is a top priority.

#### REMEMBER:

Take control of your health.  
Clean your hands.

