

80% of germs are transferred by touch.

As a patient or visitor at a hospital, you have a role in preventing the spread of germs that cause serious infections. Clean your hands often while you are a patient or visiting someone in a health care facility.

Stay healthy by making handwashing a regular part of your cooking routine. Wash hands to prevent spreading germs to your food and your family.

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer does not kill *Clostridium difficile* or "C.diff." This infection causes severe diarrhea. If you have C. diff, make sure your health care providers wear gloves to examine you. You, your loved ones, and health care providers should wash your hands with soap and water to prevent the spread..



As a patient, keep your hands clean—and make sure your health care providers clean their hands before touching you.

You should advocate for your safety. It is okay to set expectations for your health care providers. Examples are "Before you start the exam, please clean your hands again" and "Please clean your hands before changing my bandages."

Alcohol-based hand sanitizer kills most of the bad germs that make you sick. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers kill the good and bad germs, but the good germs quickly come back on your hands.

Your hands can spread germs too. Make sure you and your visitors are cleaning your hands as well.

Handwashing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of infection.

Frequent and thorough handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of infection and avoid getting sick. Tips:

- Sing "Happy Birthday" **twice** to know you've washed your hands long enough
- When you wash your hands, be sure to scrub all surfaces, including the back of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails
- Public toilets and door handles harbor all kinds of germs. Avoid the spread of germs and use a paper towel to flush the toilet and open the door



**Indiana Patient
Safety Center**

of the Indiana Hospital Association