



London Health Sciences Centre



## Handwashing *matters.*

Ten myths about hand hygiene  
and ten reasons why you should wash  
your hands.

# Number 10:

*“The room looks clean and the supplies look clean, so I don’t need to wash my hands.”*

Handwashing *matters* as one of the many factors that help to reduce infection rates and improve the quality of care we provide. Clean hands minimize the likelihood of transmitting contaminants to clean surfaces and supplies.

## Number 9:

*“I didn’t touch anything dirty and my hands still feel clean, so why should I wash them?”*

Handwashing *matters* because it keeps our patients safe from microorganisms living on our skin, and in the patient and hospital environment that are invisible to the naked eye.

## Number 8:

*“Gloves protect me, not the patient. Besides, I wear gloves all the time; I don’t need to wash my hands.”*

Handwashing *matters* because bacteria multiply on your skin while you wear gloves.

## Number 7:

*“I keep my nails and jewelry clean; it’s not a big deal.”*

Handwashing *matters* because rings and false nails harbor organisms such as pseudomonas – which is why wearing them violates hospital policy. Washing your hands is not only considered best practice, it’s endorsed by the Ministry of Health and Safer Health Care Now.

## Number 6:

*“I washed my hands when I got off the elevator and again right before the phone call; I don’t have to wash them before I see a patient.”*

Handwashing *matters* every time – whether you pick up a chart, answer a phone or come into contact with a high-touch surface like a keyboard or a doorknob.

## Number 5:

*“This patient isn’t contagious, so I don’t need to wash my hands.”*

Handwashing *matters* because we are trying to prevent the spread of organisms *between* patients. Besides, when they see us do it, they trust us more.

## Number 4:

*“I didn’t come into contact with any bodily fluids, so I don’t need to wash my hands.”*

Handwashing *matters* before aseptic technique AND after body fluid contact. If your hands are visibly soiled, soap and water is recommended.

## Number 3:

*“I’m not responsible if others choose not to wash their hands.”*

Handwashing *matters* to your colleagues because we are all professionals and accountable for the delivery of safe patient care.

## Number 2:

*“I was only dropping off something in the room.”*

Handwashing *matters* before and after coming in contact with the patient environment.

# Number 1:

*“I’m healthy; I don’t need to wash my hands.”*

Handwashing *matters* because it keeps YOU and YOUR LOVED ONES safe. They don’t want to get sick – and they don’t want you to get sick, either.

# Honorable mention:

*“ABHR will ruin my skin.”*

No, it won't. Handwashing *matters*: wash your hands.