

Physician Hand Hygiene Champion:

Tips and Tricks for Success

When it comes to hand hygiene compliance, physicians are able, more than any other, to directly influence their colleagues. The following “tips and tricks” of other hand hygiene champions have been compiled to augment those strategies you likely already have.

1) Lead by example:

The literature shows that if you’re washing your hands prior to entering and leaving every patient room, preparing supplies prior to entering the patient environment and explaining all of this to patients to raise their comfort level in front of your peers, your colleagues will be more likely to follow suit.

2) Diagnose the problem:

Talk to the hand hygiene auditor and/or manager to see if they have any insight into what’s behind the low rates on your unit. Are the rates visibly posted? Does auditing meet minimum thresholds? Is there an obvious challenge facing the unit or a discernible trend in the numbers that’s easily attributed to specific phenomenon? Ask your colleagues for their opinion on these subjects – either one-on-one, or during rounds. It can be a great opener to a broader discussion around compliance.

3) Look at workflow/process issues that may be presenting barriers to success:

Are there gaps in processes or procedures? Inoperable ABHRs or a breakdown in cleaning/resupply/education or auditing that need to be addressed? Do you need help from an infection control practitioner (ICP) or process analyst? Don’t be afraid to ask. To contact an ICP for support, get in touch with Infection Prevention and Control at pager 15836 at UH and at pager 15591 at VH. To contact a process analyst contact Quality and Patient Safety at extension 52691.

4) Provide education:

The literature shows that in-service presentations (either live or videotaped) had more influence than did email information. Look for opportunities to teach physicians when and how to keep their hands clean. This could be at rounds, during a formal teaching event or other teachable moment.

5) Try something new:

Is the culture on your unit conducive to outside-of-the-box solutions? If so, you may want to consider a creative approach to increasing hand hygiene compliance. A friendly competition on compliance rates between units or a fun video production posted to the physician hand hygiene website could be the catalyst for change that you're looking for.

6) Use resources available to you:

Visit the physician hand hygiene website for resources to help:

<https://intra.lhsc.on.ca/infection-safety/hand-hygiene/physician-hand-hygiene>

Hand hygiene is a key part of the fight against hospital-acquired infections and we all want the best outcomes for our patients. Physician hand hygiene compliance rates at LHSC have improved dramatically in recent years; with your help, we can improve those numbers even further.