JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

"*Infection: Don't Pass It On*"

How are hands contaminated?

Usually by touching mucous membranes, non-intact skin, hair, axillae, groin or perineal areas, body fluids or surfaces that are contaminated. A fecal sample the size of a penny may have over 100-billion bacteria. Viruses that cause colds, influenza, hepatitis, and diarrhea are shed in nasal secretions and in stool. Seemingly clean activities such as lifting patients, taking vital signs, and cleaning up body fluids have resulted in thousands of bacteria on hand cultures.

Are alcohol hand rubs effective?

Yes, antiseptic hand rubs that contain over 60% alcohol are highly effective against pathogenic bacteria and most viruses. Their use generally results in a 100 - 1,000 fold reduction in pathogens. Emollients are added to prevent hands from becoming too dry or irritated, as is often the case with frequent soap use.

How are viruses and bacteria transmitted?

Most commonly by direct contact with an infected person, or through the environment, which may be contaminated by infected secretions or droplets. You become part of the transmission chain when your hands touch people or objects. Alcohol wipes may be used to decontaminate high-touch items, such as keyboards.

CLEAN HANDS SAVE LIVES!!!

More information on hand hygiene is available through the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention Web site at http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene

Infection: Don't Pass It On

www.publichealth.va.gov/InfectionDontPassItOn

Department of Veterans Affairs