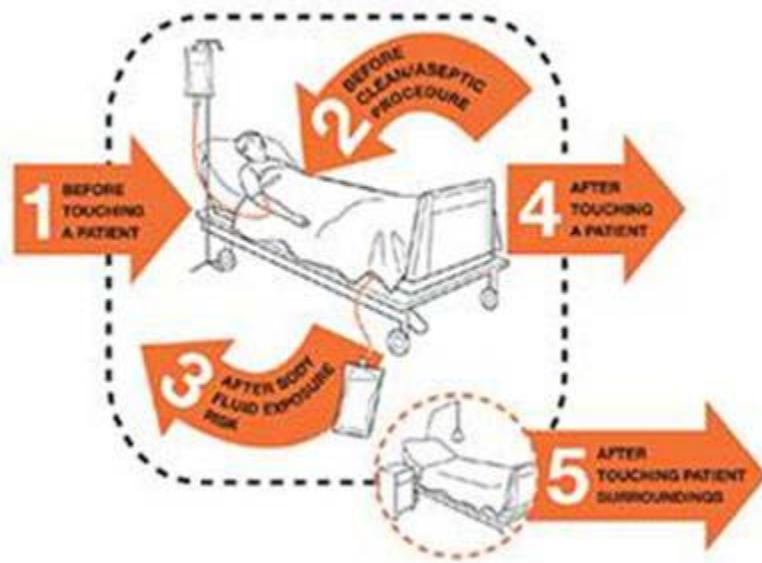


September 4, 2009



House staff
Medical Students

In 1847 Ignaz P. Semmelweiss, an obstetrician, proved that a simple intervention decreased mortality in patients from 11% to 1%. This 10-fold reduction in mortality was accomplished by simply making physicians wash their hands before they delivered babies.

Hand hygiene is the cornerstone of infection control and prevention. As such we believe that hand hygiene is a professional responsibility and behavior.

As part of Joint Commission standards and patient safety initiatives the hospital has launched a new hand hygiene initiative and has started tracking compliance with hand hygiene throughout the hospital through specially trained staff using standardized methods and definitions. Our goals are to achieve 85% hand hygiene compliance by the end of October and 95% by the end of December 2009. To do so the hospital has prepared several educational activities, and has decided to move to a “zero tolerance” policy. Zero tolerance means that auditors will point out hand hygiene deficiencies in real time and refer the individual for counseling and education as per hospital policy. Repeat offenders will be undergoing disciplinary processes. For physicians, repeat offenses may be escalated to credentialing action for medical staff members and to program directors for house staff and medical students. Please refer to hand hygiene CME activity on physician link and the above graphic on the 5 moments of hand hygiene to assist you in identifying hand hygiene opportunities and please contact infection control if you have any questions about these procedures.

By the same token we would like to share some of the successes of our infection control initiatives for this past fiscal year. We have done a remarkable job in controlling ventilator-associated pneumonias as most of our intensive care units performed better than the 50th

percentile of national benchmarks, and in fact two of our units did not have any of these events for the past year. Our catheter-related bloodstream infection rates continue to be over the 50th percentile for most of units and reduction of these events will be a primary focus for the hospital this year. We continue to make great advances in the prevention of catheter-related urinary tract infections as well. This year all of our infection control efforts have avoided an estimated \$11,000,000 in excess healthcare costs for our patients and the hospital.

Hand hygiene is the right thing to do. It's in your hands!

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