



## Canada's Hand Hygiene Challenge

### How to Speak to Healthcare Workers About Hand Hygiene

- As the patient or a family member, you are the *most important* member of the healthcare team.
- Because you are the central member of your healthcare team, you have a role to play.
- Here are some tips about how to communicate with healthcare workers.
  1. Ask the healthcare worker for his/her name
  2. If you don't know the healthcare worker's role in your care, ask!
  3. Introduce the healthcare worker(s) to your family member and assure them that this person might ask questions as well
  4. Be prepared. If you have a number of questions, write them down and have them ready. Let the healthcare worker know you have some questions
- Healthcare workers are very busy people. They want to do everything they can to help get you well and to avoid getting a healthcare associated infection but sometimes they forget to clean their hands.
- Before they begin examining you or providing care and if you're not sure if the healthcare worker has cleaned his/her hands, ask...
  5. "I know you washed your hands just awhile ago, but would you mind cleaning them again before you begin?"
  6. "Would you mind cleaning your hands again in front of me?"
- Ask your visitors (family and friends) to also clean their hands frequently. Infections can spread by simple contact with any number of surfaces so it's important that we all work together to keep you safe by practicing hand hygiene often.

Longtin, Y., Sax, H., Allegranzi, B., Hugonnet, S., & Pittet, D. Patients' Beliefs and Perceptions of Their Participation to Increase Healthcare Worker Compliance with Hand Hygiene. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*, 2009; 30(9): 830-839.  
Centers for Disease Control at: <http://www.premierpedia.com/multimedia/quality-safety/safety/HandwashingVideo-Engl.mp4> or <http://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene>