Hand Washing - The James

When you are sick or have an injury, you are at a greater risk for an infection. One of the most important things you can do to protect yourself and reduce the risk of infection is to wash your hands properly and often.

It also is important for your caregivers and visitors to wash their hands. Ask your health care team, caregivers, and visitors to wash their hands when they come into the room. It is important for anyone who may touch you, or the items used for your care, to wash their hands.

Many home care procedures are done by you or a family member. Hand washing is just as important at home to help reduce the risk of infection and should be done, even if you use gloves to complete the care.

How to Wash Your Hands

1. Turn on the water to cold or warm. Adjust the flow so the water does not splash.

2. Wet your hands.

3. Rub soap over your wet hands.

4. Lather your palms and the back of your hands and wrists. Rub your hands together on all sides, between your fingers and around your nails for at least 15 seconds.

5. You may use a nail brush to clean under and around your nails.

6. Rinse your hands well, **leave the water running**.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

7. Dry your hands with a paper towel or clean towel. Use the towel in your hand to turn off the water. This keeps your clean hand from touching the faucet handle, which is not clean.
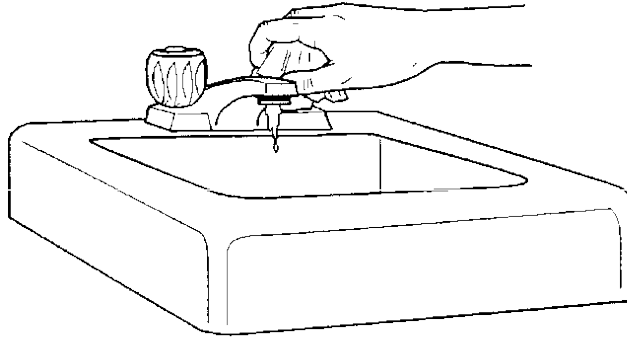
Alcohol Hand Rub

Alcohol hand rub, also called hand sanitizer, can be used instead of soap and water if your hands do not look dirty or soiled. To clean your hands with the alcohol rub, use enough to cover the front and back of both hands and all your fingers. Rub the sanitizer briskly over the front and back of your hands and between your fingers. Do this for 15 to 20 seconds until your hands are dry.