

IMPROVING HAND HYGIENE THROUGH A MULTIMODAL STRATEGY

WHO's multimodal hand hygiene improvement strategy

- Effective hand hygiene improvement programmes can prevent up to 50% avoidable infections acquired during health care delivery and generate economic savings on average 16 times the cost of implementation.
- The multimodal improvement strategy is highly effective, leading to significant improvement of key hand hygiene indicators in health care facilities. It comprises five elements.
- Implementing a multimodal strategy leads to a reduction of health care-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance, and substantially helps to stop outbreaks.

Use the five elements to drive improvement

All elements are **essential** and **complementary**.

The **five critical elements** to be implemented as part of an infection prevention and control programme at the health care facility level, in an integrated manner, can be simplified as: Build it; Teach it; Check it; Sell it and Live it (see visual).

Track progress

- Track progress over time through use of the Hand Hygiene Self-Assessment Framework.
- The Framework is a **diagnostic tool**, identifying strengths and gaps requiring improvement across each of the five elements.

SYSTEM CHANGE (Build it)



- Achievement of continuous availability of the necessary infrastructure, materials and equipment to effectively perform hand hygiene at the point of care.
- This includes the reliable and uninterrupted provision of alcohol-based hand rub at the **point of care**, continuous supplies of safe, clean water, soap, single-use towels, and an adequate number of functioning sinks.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION (Teach it)



- **Tailored education and practical training of clinical staff, patients and visitors** about the importance of hand hygiene to better understand when and how it should be performed.
- Education should also address **all other health workers**, including hospital administrators, cleaning personnel and community health workers.

MONITORING AND FEEDBACK OF HAND HYGIENE INDICATORS (Check it)



- Regular **monitoring and evaluation** (ideally using standardized tools) of hand hygiene infrastructures (location of facilities at the point of care, consumption of soap and alcohol-based hand rubs), including knowledge of and compliance with best practices.
- Providing regular **feedback** to health workers and senior management using local data is a very powerful approach to raise awareness and achieve improvement of practices.

REMINDERS IN THE WORKPLACE/ COMMUNICATIONS (Sell it)



- Posters, stickers, visual and vocal prompts, banners, screensavers. They can **continually prompt and remind** health workers about the importance of hand hygiene and the indications when to perform it.
- They also help to **involve patients and their visitors** and inform them of the level of care they should expect from health workers with regards to hand hygiene.

SAFETY CLIMATE/CULTURE CHANGE (Live it)



- Creating an organizational environment that prioritizes high compliance with hand hygiene to achieve patient and health worker safety.
- At the **institutional level**, this should include the **allocation of resources** for hand hygiene programmes and **clear messages of support** for hand hygiene from **leaders** within the institution, setting benchmarks or targets, and having hand hygiene champions.
- At an **individual level**, the aim is to ensure that health workers identify hand hygiene as a **priority** that reflects their commitment to do no harm to patients. Partnering with patients and patient organizations to promote hand hygiene may also promote a climate of patient safety, but should be undertaken sensitively and in close consultation with key stakeholders, including health workers and patient representatives.