

## Clean Hands Count for Patients

- Make sure you, your visitors, and healthcare workers have clean hands

When should you clean your hands

- Before preparing or eating food
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Before and after changing wound dressings or bandages
- After using the restroom
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- After touching hospital surfaces such as bed rails, bedside tables, doorknobs, remote controls, or the phone

How should you clean your hands?

### **With an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:**

- Put product on hands and rub hands together
- Cover all surfaces until hands feel dry
- This should take around 20 seconds

### **With soap and water:**

1. Wet your hands with warm water. Use liquid soap if possible. Apply a nickel- or quarter-sized amount of soap to your hands.
2. Rub your hands together until the soap forms a lather and then rub all over the top of your hands, in between your fingers and the area around and under the fingernails.
3. Continue rubbing your hands for at least 15 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under running water.
5. Dry your hands using a paper towel if possible. Then use your paper towel to turn off the faucet and to open the door if needed.

### **Protect yourself by asking questions:**

1. **Clean your own hands** and ask those around you to do the same.
2. Don't be afraid to use your voice: **it's ok to ask your healthcare provider questions**, such as:
  - "I didn't see you clean your hands when you came in, would you mind cleaning them again before you examine me?"
  - "I'm worried about germs spreading in the hospital. Will you please clean your hands once more before you start my treatment?"
3. **Ask your loved ones to clean their hands too:**
  - "I saw you clean your hands when you arrived some time ago, but would you mind cleaning them again?"