Criteria for Product Selection

Products available for use within Queensland Health (QH) Hospital and Health Services are to be purchased from Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA487), distributed via Central Pharmacy, Newmarket, Brisbane.

TGA Registration

Queensland Health selects antibacterial (antimicrobial) hand hygiene products that are regulated as medicines by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Antibacterial products regulated as cosmetics by the National Industry Chemicals Notification and Assessment Scheme (NICNAS) are not suitable for use in clinical settings or for prevention of transmission of disease (refer TGA website).

Healthcare Worker’s (HCW) Acceptance

Product selection should be based on HCW acceptance of the product as this has been identified as an important factor in ensuring compliance.

For HCW acceptance the characteristics of the product should include:

- dermal tolerance and lack of skin reactions
- fragrance (strong fragrance may occasionally cause allergic symptoms for some HCWs and patients) - preference is given to products with mild or no fragrances
- consistency
- colour
- ease of use.

Location of Alcohol Based Hand Rub Solution Dispensers

The time required for a HCW to leave a patient’s bedside, go to a sink, and wash and dry their hands before attending to a patient is a deterrent to frequent hand cleansing. To achieve a maximum effect and optimal compliance of HCWs with hand hygiene, alcohol-based hand hygiene products should be easily available through dispensers placed:

- close to the point of care
- on the end of every patient bed (fixed or removable brackets)
- near the door to each patient room
- high staff traffic areas (e.g. nurse’s station, pan room, medication room and patient room entrance)
- affixed to mobile work trolleys (e.g. intravenous, medication and dressing trolleys)
- not adjacent to sinks avoiding any confusion between soap and alcohol-based hand hygiene products
• other multi-use patient-care areas, such as examination rooms and outpatient consultation rooms
• entrances to each ward, outpatient clinic or department
• public areas – e.g. waiting rooms, receptions areas, hospital foyers, near elevator doors in high traffic areas.

Clinical Area Placement Considerations

In patient care areas where ingestion or accidental splashing of the alcohol-based hand hygiene product is a risk (e.g. inpatient mental health or substance abuse treatment areas), local clinicians need to use discretion in their use of these products.

Small personal bottles that HCWs carry with them may be more appropriate in some of the above areas.

Please refer to Hand Hygiene Australia: 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene – Manual section 3.10.2 Clinical Area Placement Considerations for detailed information.

Liquid Handwash Solutions

Non active Handwash Solutions

Non active handwash solutions have minimal, if any, antimicrobial activity. Non active handwash solutions are suitable for routine/social handwashing.

• handwashing with plain soap can remove dirt, soil, and various organic substances from the hands and loosely adherent transient flora (microorganisms)
• non active handwash solutions are available on QH SOA487.

Antimicrobial Handwash Solutions

An antimicrobial soap is recommended:

• prior to clinical and surgical procedures where it is important to reduce bacterial counts as low as possible, and/or
• to reduce cross transmission of multi-drug resistant organisms.

A variety of antimicrobial soap solutions are available on QH SOA487, including:

• 2% and 4% chlorhexidine gluconate (products containing 4% chlorhexidine gluconate are most likely to cause dermatitis when used frequently for antiseptic handwashing)
• 7.5% povidine-iodine (iodophor)
• 1% Triclosan (Triclosan is well tolerated and seldom causes allergic reactions, however it has limited activity against Gram-negative bacilli [particularly Psedomonas aeruginosa]).

Hand Drying Products

Hand drying is an essential step in hand cleansing and should be done in such a way that hand recontamination does not occur.

Common hand drying methods include:

• multiple-use cloth towels of the hanging or roll type (these are not recommended for use in healthcare settings)
• hot air dryers These are not recommended as they:
  • have been shown to be less efficient than paper towels
- require longer time needed to achieve dry hands, with the possibility of a negative impact on hand hygiene compliance, and
- produce aerosolisation of waterborne pathogens

- interleaved paper towels (in healthcare facilities, hand drying should be done by using individual paper towels). It is important that the hands are patted dry rather than rubbing to avoid skin damage such as cracking.

**Hand Care Products**

Hand care products (e.g. moisturisers) should be:

- provided to HCWs to minimise the occurrence of irritant contact dermatitis associated with hand cleansing (refer to QH SOA487 for available options)
- all hand care products available on QH SOA487 are compatible with other hand hygiene products available through QH SOA487
- dispensed from single use containers that minimise contamination,

**References**