

Hand Hygiene

Washing your hands is one of the most basic defenses against the spread of germs and bacteria. Hands commonly come in contact with the face, where germs easily enter the body through the mouth, nose and eyes.

During flu season, it is especially important to follow basic hand hygiene rules to prevent the spread of flu viruses.

Someone who is under hospice care may be especially susceptible to germs. Help prevent the spread of germ by following general hand hygiene guidelines:

- Always wash hands after using the bathroom.
- Always wash hands before eating.
- Wash hands or use antibacterial gel after coming in contact with health care workers.
- Make sure all visitors clean hands thoroughly.
- Use antibacterial gel is soap and water is not available.

When in doubt, ask your health care worker if they have cleaned their hands.

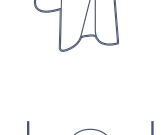
PROPER HANDWASHING STEPS:

- If using a cloth towel to dry hands, have it nearby before you start to wash.
- Wet hands with water.
- Apply soap to hands. Liquid soap is best—germs can live on bar soap. If you do use bar soap, store it on a rack that allows it to dry between uses.
- Rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds, making sure to cover all surfaces of hands, fingers, and thumbs.
- Rinse hands well to remove soap residue.
- Dry hands gently and thoroughly using soft paper towels. If using cloth towels, remember that damp towels may harbor germs. Allow them to dry out after use, and replace them often.
- Use towel to turn off faucet.

ABOUT DISINFECTING HAND SANITIZERS:

Alcohol-based cleansers kill germs to help prevent infection so choose a gel or foam sanitizer containing alcohol. Use hand sanitizers:

- For routine cleansing of hands anytime they are not visibly dirty.
- After contact with contaminated objects in the environment.
- Before and after you care for someone who is very sick, very old or very young.
- After touching someone's skin, especially when the other person has a cold or other illness.
- When you travel.
- When soap and water are not readily available.
- Whenever you want to clean your hands.



Remember, Big Bend Hospice is here to support you. Call your Big Bend Hospice team if you have any questions or concerns at (850) 878-5310.