



Guidelines for Good Hand Hygiene

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Background Information

Disposable gloves provide personal protection in the laboratory. Both latex and nitrile gloves provide protection from infectious agents and biological hazards. Some gloves are also rated for chemical resistance, viral penetration, and puncture resistance. Glove manufacturers can provide information on the chemical resistance and viral penetration tests performed on their products. Latex allergies are a common problem among glove wearers. These individuals should utilize nitrile gloves. Some individuals will develop sensitivities to chemicals used in the production of nitrile gloves. These individuals should utilize synthetic gloves. Another option for sensitive individuals is the use of cotton glove liners. Use of glove liners can decrease skin irritation in sensitive individuals.

In order for gloves to provide the best protection possible, glove wearers must practice good hand hygiene. Healthy, intact skin is a good barrier to biological hazards when gloves fail. Dry, chapped skin can allow infectious agents to gain entrance to the body in the event of a glove failure. Proper hand washing and lotion use should be practiced by all glove wearers. Petroleum-based lotions can degrade latex and should not be utilized in the laboratory. Choose a water-based lotion that is compatible with latex. While wearing gloves be aware of signs of degradation and damage and change gloves as needed.

Procedure

- Wet hands with warm water before applying soap.
- Wash hands using a good technique. (Sing “Happy Birthday” twice.)
- Rinse and dry hands thoroughly.
- Cover all cuts and abrasions with waterproof bandages.
- Keep fingernails short and clean.
- Keep jewelry worn to a minimum.
- Always wash hands after removal of gloves.
- Use a water-based hand lotion compatible with your gloves.
- Use waterless hand sanitizer as an alternative.

Online Resources and References

Gloves

- [Microflex Glove Selection](#)
- [Medical Exam Glove Selection](#)
- [VWR Glove Selection](#)

Compatible Lotions

- Proguard Professional Hand Cream
- Steris Lotion Soft Skin Conditioner Hand Cream
- SoftGUARD Extra-Strength Barrier Hand Cream