

Media Release

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Clean hands save lives

Washing and cleaning our hands is something we do many times a day, but for Healthcare workers, it can save lives.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), good hand hygiene is the most simple and effective way of avoiding infections, and staff at the Bay of Plenty District Health Board agree.

On Wednesday May 5 DHB staff will make a stand against hospital infection rates and campaign for improved hand hygiene as part of an international awareness day.

“We will be visiting staff and patients around the hospital to remind them about washing their hands and using the alcohol gel provided,” says Tauranga Hospital infection control clinical nurse specialist Robyn Boyne. “There will be quizzes and prizes as well as a colouring competition for children in the children’s ward.”

The WHO has identified five key ‘moments’ when healthcare staff should clean or wash their hands - before patient contact, before a procedure, after a procedure or body fluid exposure risk, after patient contact and after contact with patient surroundings,” says Robyn. “Whilst this might sound simple and obvious, we need to make sure it’s happening 100 per cent of the time. The use of alcohol gel (available in every room) makes cleaning hands easy, quick and effective.”

Research suggests that 5-10 per cent of patients develop an infection in hospital that they didn’t come in with, and there is overwhelming evidence that cleaning and washing

hands is the most effective way of preventing infections and stopping them from spreading.

“We’d like to remind visitors to hospital that they should wash their hands, or use the alcohol hand gel (sterigel) before visiting a patient and again when they leave. Friends and family should also stay away from visiting people in hospital if they are sick, to prevent spreading germs,” says Robyn.

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