

Patient Information leaflet
Protecting your baby from infection
(Handwashing Technique for Parents and Visitors on the Neonatal Unit)

Why is Handwashing important?

Babies on the Neonatal Unit (NICU) are very vulnerable to infection. By washing your hands, you can remove bacteria, which might be unsafe for your baby.

When should I wash my hands?

- Every time you go into the Neonatal Unit or leave the Unit. This will help to reduce germs being carried into the unit from outside and help prevent germs being carried outside.
- In the Unit:
 - Before and after you touch your baby.
 - Before and after every nappy change.
 - Before and after expressing breast milk.
 - Before and after preparing the feed for your baby.
 - Before and after accessing the milk fridge/ sterile bottles store.
 - Each time you enter a room, Nursery, breastfeeding room, milk kitchen, rest room etc.
 - Each time you leave a room.

Is there a 'right' way to wash my hands?

Yes — Please follow these steps to effectively wash your hands:

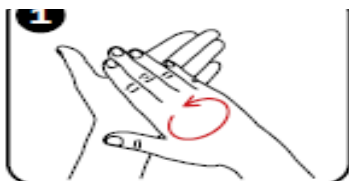
1. Take off your outdoor coat and hang it on the hooks provided by reception (keep your valuables with you or use a locker).
2. Roll up your sleeves and remove any watch, bracelets and rings. Keep them securely in your pocket or bag until you leave the Neonatal Unit.
3. Wet your hands. Turn the tap off using your elbow.
4. Apply soap from the dispenser and wash your hands, wrists and lower arms following the instructions in the next panel.
5. Dry your hands, wrists and lower arms using the paper towels provided.
6. Finally, apply the hand sanitiser provided in the dispenser, using the same technique as when washing your hands. It will dry in a few seconds.

Protecting your baby from infection

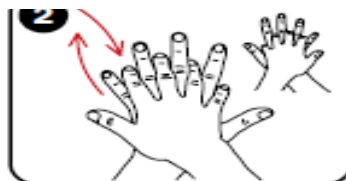
(Handwashing Technique for Parents and Visitors on the Neonatal Unit)

Handwashing technique

Follow this technique when washing your hands with soap and water **and** using hand sanitiser.



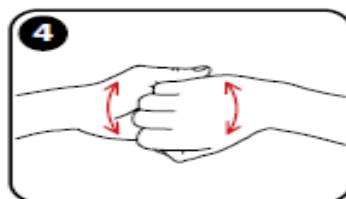
Rub soap and water or alcohol gel into your hands palm to palm



Rub back of each hand with the palm of the other hand with fingers interlaced



Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced



Rub with backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlaced



Rub each thumb clasped in opposite hand using rotational movement



Rub tips of fingers in opposite palm in a circular motion



Rub each wrist with the opposite hand.

To help protect the babies on the Neonatal Unit, all parents and visitors are asked to follow the handwashing policy at all times.

Please inform the Nurse in Charge if you see anyone not following the handwashing policy.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask a member of staff.

Leaflet adapted with consent from the Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust Leaflet:
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Handwashing Technique Information
for parents and visitors

