HANDWASHING

To prevent the spread of pathogenic microorganisms from one client to another, one staff member to another, and to safeguard one’s own health by rendering the hands clean, handwashing is an essential activity. Frequent and thorough handwashing is of prime importance in preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Special Instructions
- Handwashing must be done before and after each procedure in client care, before and after using the restroom, before and after eating, when hands are visibly soiled, before and after removing gloves, and after handling contaminated material(s) and equipment.
- Minimum length of time required for removal of most transient bacteria is 30 seconds.
- Let the water run down the hand toward the fingertips.
- Pay attention to the area between the fingers and around the nails.
- Since faucets are considered contaminated, turn the faucets off with the paper towel used for drying hands. Open any doors with the paper towel.
- Apply hand lotion frequently to assure good skin care and to combat dryness. Use small personal bottles, not stock bottles.
- Hands shall be washed immediately, or as soon as feasible, after removal of gloves or other personal protective equipment.
- Hands shall be washed with soap and water immediately, or soon as feasible, following contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Procedure for handwashing
- Stand well away from the sink and regulate water to a comfortable degree of warmth. If using hand faucets, leave the water running throughout the procedure.
- Remove jewelry.
- Moisten hands and wrists under running water. Apply a heavy lather of soap. Add water as needed to help lather from becoming dry.
- Wash hands using a circular motion and friction. Work the lather over hands and wrists, between fingers and under fingernails for ten seconds. Use friction, one hand upon the other with fingers interlaced.
- Continue washing for 30 to 60 seconds.
- Keep hands away from the sides of the sink. Start over if the hands touch the inside of the sink.
- Rinse hands thoroughly under running water, letting the water run from wrists toward the fingertips.
- Rinse hands well.
- Dry the hands with a paper towel. Turn the water off using the paper towel. Open any doors with the paper towel.

Procedure for decontaminating hands with waterless disinfectant
- Remove jewelry.
- Dispense a palmful (5 grams) of disinfectant in one hand.
- Wash hands using a circular motion and friction. Work the disinfectant over hands and wrists, between fingers and under fingernails for ten seconds. Use friction, one hand upon the other with fingers interlaced.
- Continue rubbing until the disinfectant is dry.