# **Infection Prevention**

Significant steps can be made in the prevention of infections by simply encouraging clients to observe basic hygiene and cleanliness. Standard Precautions infection prevention are utilized in addition to other infection control practices specific to THRIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH. Important aspects of infection prevention are outlines in the following pages.

## **Handwashing**

At all bathrooms and sinks will have signs for employees and clients to wash their hands frequently and effectively for the prevention of infection and cleanliness of the facility. Staff will also encourage clients to wash their own hands frequently throughout the day; or at least after using the restroom, before and after meals.

THRIVE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH utilizes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for best practices in hand washing and other infection control measures. Below is a summary detailing basic information involving washing of hands in clinical and treatment settings.

**Hand Sanitizer**

There is hand sanitizer in high volume areas of Thrive Behavioral Health. Every reception and waiting room area, the conference rooms, and all staff have personal hand sanitizer to help reduce risk of infections while in the community.

##### **Introduction to Hand Hygiene**

What is Hand Hygiene?

* Hand Hygiene means cleaning your hands by using either handwashing (washing hands with soap and water), antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub (i.e. alcohol-based hand sanitizer including foam or gel).

#### **Why Practice Hand Hygiene?**

* Cleaning your hands reduces:
  + The spread of potentially deadly germs to clients
  + The risk of healthcare provider colonization or infection caused by germs acquired from the client.

#### **Two Methods of Hand Hygiene: Hand Sanitizer vs. Washing with Soap and Water**

* Hand sanitizers are an effective and readily available product for reducing the number of germs on the hands of healthcare providers. Antiseptic soaps and detergents are the next most effective and non-antimicrobial soaps are the least effective.
* When hands are not visibly dirty, hand sanitizers are the preferred method for cleaning your hands in the healthcare setting.
* Soap and water are recommended for cleaning visibly dirty hands
  + During Routine Client Care:
    - Wash with soap and water, regularly:
    - When hands are visibly dirty
    - Before eating
    - After using a restroom
  + Use Hand Sanitizer:
    - Use of alcohol based hand sanitizers

##### **When and How to Perform Hand Hygiene**

#### **When to Perform Hand Hygiene**

* All staff and clients are informed of the proper hand washing techniques at time of hire/intake and ongoing especially during the Flu season.
* Clean your hands:
  + Before eating
  + Before and after having direct contact with a client's intact skin.
  + After contact with blood or other bodily fluids.
  + After glove removal
  + After using a restroom
  + After smoking

#### **Techniques for Hand Sanitizer**

* When using hand sanitizer:
  + Put product on hands and rub hands together

Cover all surfaces until hands feel dry

* + This should take around twenty seconds

#### **Techniques for Washing Hands with Soap and Water**

* The CDC [Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings](http://wwwdev.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5116.pdf) recommends:
  + When cleaning your hands with soap and water, wet your hands first with water, apply the amount of product recommended by the manufacturer to your hands, and rub your hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers.
  + Rinse your hands with water and use disposable towels to dry. Use towel to turn off the faucet.
  + Avoid using hot water, to prevent drying of skin.
* Other entities have recommended that cleaning your hands with soap and water should take around twenty seconds.
* Either time is acceptable. The focus should be on cleaning your hands at the right times and frequnelty throughout the day.

## **Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette**

All staff members showing signs of respiratory illness, including cough, congestion, congestion, runny nose, sneezing or increased production of respiratory secretions will cover their mouths and encourage clients to do the same. All respiratory secretions are considered potentially infectious, as it is not always known what respiratory agent a person may have. When available tissues should be used to cover the mouth when this occurs; however, if a tissue is not available it is safer to use a sleeve than cough or sneeze into the air. Wash hands when finished.

Influenza and other serious respiratory illnesses are spread by cough, sneezing or unclean hands. To help stop the spread of germs staff and clients are informed during the flu season to avoid close contact with people who are sick. Staff are reminded to stay home when sick. Clients are made aware of flu like symptoms if they display any, there are referred to a physician. Staff and clients are educated on the importance of covering their mouth with a tissue when they cough or sneeze, and to wash hands often with soap and water.

The practice of other good health habits, such as cleaning and disinfecting frequently, is also encouraged. The frequency of cleaning and disinfecting is increased during flu season to support the prevention of infection. High volume areas and touch points such as the waiting room, door handles and bathrooms are cleaned more frequently.