Hand Hygiene – FAQs

1. Does the 2017 FDA Final Rule for antiseptic products apply to our clinic healthcare antiseptic hand wash products?
   - No, the FDA rule, effective September 2017 does not apply to healthcare antiseptics, consumer antiseptic rubs or first aid antiseptics.
   - FDA has determined that 19 active ingredients in over-the-counter consumer hand and body washes (including triclosan and triclocarban) are misbranded. Companies will no longer be able to market antibacterial washes with these active ingredients because manufacturers did not demonstrate that the ingredients are both safe for long-term daily use and more effective than plain soap and water in preventing illness and the spread of certain infections.
   - The final rule applies to consumer antiseptic wash products containing one or more of 19 specific active ingredients, including the most commonly used ingredients – triclosan and triclocarban. Click here for the FDA Final Rule

   Resource
   1. FDA. Safety and Effectiveness of Consumer Antiseptics: Topical Antimicrobial Drug Products for Over-the-counter Human Use A Rule by the Food and Drug Administration, Sep., 2016

2. Can we use alcohol-based hand rubs before surgical procedures?
   - Yes. If you want to use an alcohol-based product before surgery, it must be labeled as a surgical hand-scrub product with persistent activity. Be sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use (IFU) for all hand hygiene products.

   - The actual technique involves two steps:
     1. Prewash your hands and forearms with a plain or non-antimicrobial soap, rinse, and dry your hands and forearms completely.
     2. After application of the alcohol-based product as recommended by the IFU, allow hands and forearms to dry thoroughly before donning sterile gloves

   Resources
3. How many times can you use alcohol-based hand rubs before you must wash your hands with soap and water?

- It is best to wash hands with soap and water any time personnel feel a “build-up after repeated use of alcohol-based hand rubs. Some product manufactures have recommended hand washing after 5-10 applications of alcohol-based products. Therefore, check your product IFU and rely on when you feel a build-up of product.

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