

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Selection and Placement of ABHR during COVID-19 in Long-term Care and Retirement Homes

This fact sheet provides considerations for alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) selection and placement in long-term care homes (LTCHs) and retirement homes (RHs). It may be used in addition to an existing Public Health Ontario's [Just Clean Your Hands](#) program or [Best Practices for Hand Hygiene](#).

General principles

- Hand hygiene is a key part of infection prevention and control (IPAC), even when other control measures such as personal protective equipment (PPE) are used.
- Following best practices for hand hygiene is essential for preventing transmission of COVID-19 within LTCHs and RHs and increasing resident and staff safety.
- ABHR is safe, effective and the preferred way of cleaning hands, when hands are not visibly soiled.
- LTCHs and RHs need to continue to select and provide safe, effective ABHR and ensure it is available in specific locations within the home.



How to select ABHR product

- Select a product with 70-90% alcohol concentration. If not available, ABHR with 60-90% concentration may be used until you can access ABHR with the 70-90% concentration preferred for health care settings.
- Check to make sure products you are selecting are on the Health Canada list of authorized hand hygiene products or products with interim authorizations. Select products that contain alcohol as the active ingredient. Refer to Health Canada's [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\): List of hand sanitizers authorized by Health Canada](#).
- Select ABHR products containing moisturizers, when possible.
- **Do not** use expired product. Be sure to note product expiration date when selecting product.
- **Do not** use non-alcohol based hand sanitizers. These products have not been determined to be effective and are not recommended.
- **Do not** refill or top-up ABHR containers or dispensers. This is not recommended as it can result in product contamination.



Where and how to place ABHR

- ABHR needs to be available within arm's reach of where direct resident care is being provided (point of care). Staff need to be able to follow the [4 moments for hand hygiene](#).
- If ABHR cannot be safely placed at the point of care in some areas, consider alternatives such as staff carrying small personal bottles of ABHR. For more information see the Public Health Ontario's [Just Clean Your Hands Product Placement Tool](#).
- ABHR is required to be placed where PPE is put on and removed (donned and doffed). This may include entrances into resident rooms, inside resident rooms where there may be changing of PPE or glove removal, entrances to/exits from cohorted areas during an outbreak
- Check to make sure ABHR is available in any new or reconfigured resident spaces that may be created as a result of COVID-19 or outbreak planning.
- Ensure ABHR is available in key common areas of the home, such as: facility entrances; screening areas; entrance to staff rooms, break rooms or dining rooms; resident lounges or activity rooms; and other shared spaces.
- Have a system in place to identify where ABHR dispensers are located and when they may need to be replenished.

Things to remember

- ABHR product selection and placement are key components of a hand hygiene program.
- LTCHs and RHs need to ensure that all staff and visitors have hand hygiene education and training on when and how to correctly clean hands with either ABHR or soap and water. Consider the placement of signage as visual reminders to staff and visitors.
- LTCHs and RHs may consider increasing the frequency of their hand hygiene observations or auditing and feedback programs to ensure best practices are being followed.

Learn about the virus

To learn more and access up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the Ontario Ministry of Health's website at ontario.ca/coronavirus.

For more information please contact: _____

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