

Build up hand hygiene habit for healthy living

In support of the annual Hand Hygiene Day on May 5, the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (May 3) appealed to members of the public to develop habits of cleaning hands with appropriate techniques with a view to effectively enhancing personal and public health.

The theme of Hand Hygiene Day 2024 is "Power of Hand Hygiene", which aims to highlight hand hygiene practice which can prevent and control the spread of infectious diseases and multi-drug resistant organisms. Members of the public shall incorporate hand hygiene into their daily lives and remind family members and friends to perform proper hand hygiene, especially before eating and after using toilets.

It is important to clean hands with appropriate hand hygiene techniques. When hands are visibly soiled, it is advised to clean hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; when hands are not visibly soiled, hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub for at least 20 seconds until dry is also an effective alternative. When cleaning hands, all surfaces of the hands should be covered, including palms, backs of hands, between fingers, backs of fingers, thumbs, finger tips and wrists.

According to studies, handwashing can prevent around 30 per cent of diarrheal infections and about 20 per cent of respiratory infections. Maintaining hand hygiene and hence intercepting the chain of infection not only could protect the health of the public, but also effectively minimise the spread of multi-drug resistant organisms in the community.

Since 2005, Hong Kong has pledged support for the World Health Organization's advocacy, "Clean Care is Safer Care", by actively promoting hand hygiene in both healthcare settings and in the community. This year, a multi-layered poster and GIF-animated e-poster were produced and will be put up and displayed in hospitals, clinics and the community to remind healthcare workers and the public of the importance of maintaining hand hygiene.

The public may visit the CHP's [Hand Hygiene Day 2024 webpage](#) for the e-poster and more information on hand hygiene.