

# Proper Hand Hygiene

**Narrator**

Every year in the United States, more people die from hospital-acquired infections than from breast cancer, car accidents and AIDS combined. So, it's important to know how to protect yourself while in the hospital.

**Dr. Michael Bell**

Hands are the main way that we move bacteria from one place to another. And that's why hand washing is so important. If we do a good job of washing our hands, we can break the chain of transmission. We can stop carrying bacteria from one place to the next.

**Narrator**

When people come into a hospital room they should always wash their hands.

**Dr. William Schaffner**

Well, hand washing and hand sanitation both prevent infections. The hand washing, actually the soap and the water literally pick up the bacteria and then wash them down the drain. The hand sanitizer which has alcohol in it, kills the bacteria that are on the hand.

**Narrator**

Most important, all visitors and health care professionals must wash or sanitize their hands before and after they enter your room. If you don't see them do it, ask them to.

**Vicki Brinsko, RN**

Patients should absolutely speak up and say, "You know, can you just wash your hands before you touch me?" That's very, very important. And don't be shy about it, because I think a lot of people are shy about it.

**Narrator**

You can lower your risk of contracting a deadly infection. So speak up and make sure you and everyone that enters your room practices proper hand hygiene.