

Table 1. Handwashing Guidelines

Adapted from: Kohn WG, Collins AS, Cleveland JL, et al. Guidelines for infection control in dental health-care settings—2003. *MMWR Recomm Rep*. 2003;52(RR-17):1-61.

Method	Agent	Duration	Indication
Routine handwash	Water and plain soap	15 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before and after treating patients (before and after glove placement and removal).• After bare handed touching of inanimate objects likely to be contaminated by blood or saliva.• Before leaving the dental operator or the dental laboratory.• When hands are visibly soiled.
Antiseptic handwash	Water and antimicrobial soap*	15 seconds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before and after regloving when gloves are torn, cut, or punctured.
Antiseptic hand rub	Alcohol-based hand gel	Rub until hands are dry	
Surgical antisepsis	Water and antimicrobial soap*	2-6 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before donning sterile surgeon's gloves for surgical procedures.

*Examples include chlorhexidine, iodine, iodophors, chloroxylenol, and triclosan.