### Handwashing Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Originated: August 25, 1993</th>
<th>Date Reviewed: 8.25.93, 8.25.95</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date Approved: October 20, 1999</td>
<td>10.20.99, 10.20.02, 11.16.05, 12.2.08</td>
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Approved by:

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Chairman, Infection Control Committee  
Infection Control Nurse
I. **Purpose:** This policy is designed to provide consistency in the technique and application of handwashing as an infection control measure to help safeguard patients and personnel from transmission of infection.

II. **Handwashing** is the **MOST** important means of preventing the spread of infection. Soap, running water, and friction are the three important components of handwashing. If handwashing facilities are not immediately available, antiseptic hand cleaners in conjunction with clean cloth/paper towels or antiseptic towelettes will be provided by each department.

III. **Wash your hands**
   A. Before and after work
   B. Between each patient contact
   C. Before and after each procedure on a patient
   D. Immediately after contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials
   E. After removing any personal protective equipment
   F. Before and after using the restroom.
   G. Before and after eating
   H. Before and after entering an laboratory

IV. **Steps to Good Handwashing**
   A. Wet hands
   B. Apply soap - do this after wetting as soap applied to dry hands may cause irritation
   C. Scrub hands 15-30 seconds - pay close attention to between fingers, back of hands and wrists
   D. Rinse hands well - hands not rinsed will become irritated and chapped
   E. Dry hands
   F. Turn off faucet using a towel - the faucet handles are considered to be contaminated
   G. Dispose of towel in appropriate receptacle.

V. **Alcohol Based Hand Rubs:**
   A. Alcohol based hand rubs may be used to clean hands **unless** hands are visibly soiled or contaminated with blood or body fluids or been in contact with a spore forming organism such as *C. difficile*.
   B. Apply product to palm of hand according to manufacturer’s directions for amount.
   C. Rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.
   D. Alcohol based hand rubs are not effective against spore forming bacteria such as *C. difficile*. For *C. difficile* related infections, hands should be washed with soap and water to physically remove spores from the surface of contaminated hands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products used at ECU</th>
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<td>Group</td>
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99HNDWSH
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<tr>
<th>Alcohols</th>
<th>Waterless hand cleaner</th>
<th>When soap and water is not available</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG)</td>
<td>Hibicleans</td>
<td>Surgical scrub procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iodine and iodophors</td>
<td>Betadine</td>
<td>Surgical scrub procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Para-chloro-meta-xylenol (PCMX or chloroxyenol)</td>
<td>Epicare, Soft Touch</td>
<td>Handwashing</td>
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