

Occupational Health Hand Hygiene Fact Sheet



Did You Know. . . . ?

- ✚ Studies have documented areas under the nail harbor high concentrations of bacteria. Even after careful hand-washing or the use of surgical scrubs employees often harbor substantial numbers of bacteria under the nails. Personnel wearing artificial nails have been epidemiologically implicated in several outbreaks of infection.
- ✚ The Joint Commission for Accreditation of Hospital Organizations (JCAHO) mandates hospitals comply with the National Patient Safety Goals.
 - Goal #7: mandates compliance with Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Guidelines for Hand Hygiene in Health care settings; published in October of 2002.
- ✚ Vidant Health dress code policy A60-1 and Infection control Policy G15 state:
 - Fingernails:** Fingernails must be clean, trimmed, and not extend beyond fingertips. Must not distract from or interfere with work performance.
Direct care providers: nail polish is permissible if intact, no chips, decals or jewelry.
Direct care providers and unit support staff must not wear artificial fingernails, wraps, extenders or nail wrappings, or multi-colored nails
 - A. Artificial nails are substances or devices applied to natural nails to augment or enhance nails. They include but are not limited to bonding, tips, wrappings, tapes and inlays. Because of increased scientific reports linking higher number of gram-negative microorganisms and fungi cultured from the fingertips of personnel wearing artificial nails compared to personnel with natural nails and an increased incidence of healthcare-acquired infections, artificial nails must **not** be worn by:
 1. All surgical personnel
 2. All staff involved in cleaning processes
 3. All staff involved in food preparation
 4. All direct patient caregivers
 5. All staff who prepare products for patients.
- ✚ Vidant health Infection Control Policy G15 also states patient care providers must keep nails short. (See below)
 - Nails should be kept clean. Patient care providers and others listed above must keep their nails short (less than ¼ in. long). Short is also defined as holding the hand palm up at eye level and not being able to see the nail extend beyond the fingertip.
- ✚ All Vidant health employees that are employed in the affected job categories are expected to comply with this policy and annual performance will be evaluated based on this policy.

Vidant Health continually strives to be a center of excellence. Infection is an important patient safety issue that we must continually address. Vidant Health goes beyond the minimal recommendation to ensure optimal patient safety. Employees can be proactive in patient safety issues by always complying with policies aimed at protecting the patient.