

Bare Below the Elbows

Factsheet

Having clean hands is one of the most important ways to prevent infections in hospital – for both workers and patients.

The best way to ensure healthcare workers' hands are correctly and effectively cleaned is to be Bare Below the Elbows.

This means that healthcare workers should not be wearing any clothing, jewellery, false or embellished nails, nail polish, or items such as splints, from the elbow down to the fingertips.

This is to allow good hand hygiene

All staff Dos and Don'ts when there is likely contact with patients or patient's healthcare environment	
DO	DON'T
Only a significant ring such as a single flat band may be permitted. If working in higher risk settings such as Operating Theatres, no rings are permitted.	Do not wear rings with stones or ridges
	Do not wear bracelets, and wrist watches
Keep fingernails natural, short, and clean	Nail polish should not be worn
Wear short sleeves Roll up long sleeves or push up above the elbow	Do not wear unrolled long sleeves.
Use retractable ID card holders in place of lanyards. Tuck in or secure long ties.	Do not wear long ties and lanyards
	Do not wear piercings or body modification jewellery from the elbow
Cover non-intact skin (scratches, grazes, cuts, or dermatitis) with waterproof film dressing	
Seek support as per local procedures when experiencing dermatitis, skin issues, or where your ability to perform hand hygiene may be affected.	
Seek guidance from line manager or local infection prevention and control service for staff with casts, splints, or compression garments below the elbows.	



For more information on Bare Below the Elbows visit: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guide-lines-procedures/diseases-infection/infection-prevention/standard-precautions/hand-hygiene/bare-below-elbows>

