Infection Prevention Team Newsletter May 2024

How clean are your hands?

May 5th is the World Health Organisation's Hand Hygiene Day each year. Public awareness about the importance of hand washing in preventing infections improved during the Covid-19 pandemic but have **you** kept up this improvement?

You should wash your hands:
- before and after providing any care to a resident or touching their personal belongings (even when wearing gloves)
- after using the toilet or changing a nappy
- before and after handling raw foods like meat and vegetables
- before eating or handling food
- after blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing
- before and after treating a cut or wound
- after touching animals, including pets, their food and after cleaning their cages
- after household chores such as cleaning and gardening
- when you return home after being out and about

Washing your hands properly removes dirt, viruses and bacteria to stop them spreading to other people and objects, which can spread illnesses such as food poisoning, flu or diarrhoea.

It can help stop people picking up infections and spreading them to others.

It can also help stop spreading infections when you're visiting someone in hospital or another healthcare setting.

When soap and water is not available, hand sanitiser such as alcohol gel may be a handy substitute but be aware this does not always kill all bugs.

- See the NHS website for a short video on how to wash your hands effectively https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/

- And the WHO website for more information on World Hand Hygiene Day 2024 https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-hand-hygiene-day/world-hand-hygiene-day-2024

As always, contact us for advice and report incidents and outbreaks here: IPC@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Thank you, Nicola Holland, Meryl Lawrenson and Paul Moore.