

## Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

# CDC Statement for Healthcare Personnel on Hand Hygiene during the Response to the International Emergence of COVID-19

CDC recommendations reflect the important role of hand hygiene for preventing the transmission of pathogens in healthcare settings for a wide range of pathogens. The ability of hand hygiene, including hand washing or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers to prevent infections is related to reductions in the number of viable pathogens that transiently contaminate the hands. Hand washing mechanically removes pathogens, while laboratory data demonstrate that 60% ethanol and 70% isopropanol, the active ingredients in CDC-recommended alcohol-based hand sanitizers, inactivates viruses that are genetically related to, and with similar physical properties as, the 2019-nCoV.

While the exact role of direct and indirect spread of coronaviruses between people that could be reduced by hand hygiene is unknown at this time, hand hygiene for infection prevention is an important part of the U.S. response to the international emergence of COVID-19.

CDC recommends the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the preferred form of hand hygiene in [healthcare settings](#), based upon greater access to hand sanitizer. Health care providers who use alcohol-based hand sanitizers as part of their hand hygiene routine can inform patients that they are following CDC guidelines.