

Bare Below the Elbows



What is Bare Below the Elbows?

Bare Below the Elbows (BBE) is an initiative aiming to improve the effectiveness of hand hygiene performed by health care workers.

Why Bare Below the Elbows?

After our hands, the wrist/cuff areas are the most heavily contaminated. Hand hygiene remains the single most effective means in preventing health care acquired infections including to staff. Long sleeves, wrist watches, nail enhancements, stoned rings etc. have been found to be contaminated with pathogens and impedes appropriate hand hygiene.

Bare Below the Elbows, Who should be Bare Below the Elbows?

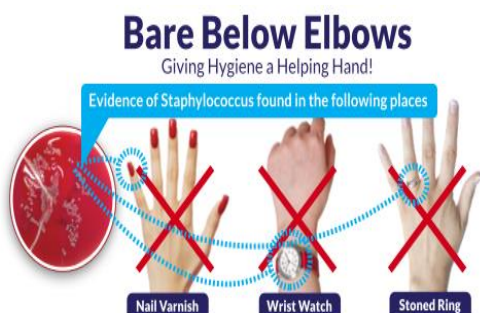
All staff undertaking direct contact with patients or patient's environment.

When should staff be Bare Below the Elbows?

Whenever giving direct patient care or in contact with patient's environment (patient zone) or when working in the clinical environment (healthcare worker zone).

How can I be Bare Below the Elbows?

- Remove bracelets, wrist watches and rings with stones or ridges when providing clinical care. A single flat ring/band may be worn but must not interfere with effective hand hygiene practice
- Make sure clothing sleeves are above the elbow and do not interfere with effective hand hygiene practice. Short sleeves are preferred
- Keep nails short and clean and do not wear nail polish. Do not wear enhanced nails (gel or acrylic) if your role has direct patient contact
- Cover any breached skin (cuts, dermatitis, or abrasion) with a waterproof film dressing. Staff with dermatitis should report for evaluation to Infection Prevention.



Bare Below the Elbows



References

1. [Western Health Dress Code Policy](#)
2. [Western Health Standard and Transmission Based Guideline](#)
3. [Western Health Hand Hygiene Guideline](#)
4. [Western Health Aseptic Non-Touch Technique Guideline](#)
5. [Queensland Health Bare Below the Elbows Guideline](#)
6. [National Hand Hygiene Initiative Manual](#) ACSSQHC
7. [WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Healthcare](#)
8. [NSQHS National Standard 3 Preventing and Controlling Healthcare-Associated Infections](#) Action 3.2 and 3.8

