News from WHO headquarters

Focus on World Hand Hygiene Day – 5 May 2022

When a health facility’s “quality and safety climate or culture” values hand hygiene and infection prevention and control (IPC), this results in both patients and health workers feeling protected and cared for.

When people seek health care, they are hoping to get better. Too often, however, they end up getting a new, avoidable infection – which can sometimes even be fatal.

Many of us know this, but many others do not, and we can all help to continue to spread the message.

That is why World Hand Hygiene Day (WHHD), on 5 May each year, exists!

The WHHD slogan for 2022 is “Unite for safety: clean your hands”.

Now is the time to unite by talking about and working together on an institutional safety climate that believes in hand hygiene for IPC and high-quality, safe care.
What is WHO doing in preparation for WHHD?

- WHO has united with colleagues working in patient safety and quality of care, and IPC experts around the world, to bring you these messages and all the materials available on the WHHD webpage.

- The IPC team has produced targeted messages and materials (see below) to highlight the importance of maintaining a permanent focus on hand hygiene and IPC action, not only on 5 May each year.

- The team is committed to continuing to talk about and working with others on information highlighting the crucial nature of hand hygiene as one element of IPC. This needs to reflect the institutional safety and quality climate or culture in all health-care settings, and should be promoted every day.

- That is why, on 5 May 2022, WHO will host a global webinar to launch a new global report and share a new hand hygiene research agenda and the results of a literature review on what an institutional quality and safety climate or culture means in the context of hand hygiene improvement and vice versa. More information on these topics will come soon!
What can you do for WHHD?

- You can access the range of WHO posters, including those addressing target audiences. These aim to attract attention and make the messages meaningful for those who should be involved in hand hygiene improvement. Please use this year’s approach in the WHO posters of thanking people as a positive way of engaging with them and encouraging them to continue to take action.

- You can make use of the range of additional promotional materials. These help to maintain visibility and reach different audiences. Countries and health facilities should use these in a variety of places to bring attention to their own local activities. They include:
  - a poster maker, which outlines exactly how you can insert your own photographs and share it – either in printed format or virtually;
  - a selfie board;
You can undertake suggested local engagement activities. These show how you can get health facilities involved in the campaign, again reaching a different audience and encouraging people to unite to create a culture of quality and safety through clean hands.

- One of the suggested activities is to host a virtual or face-to-face hand hygiene café. This aims to help individual and collective commitment, knowledge and lessons learned to emerge in an open and welcoming forum. As such, ideas and insights for hand hygiene improvement can be shared. The details of how to host these cafés and gather information from staff involvement in them can be found on the WHO WHHD webpage under “How to get involved”.

- Another suggestion is to read and share the WHHD 2022 journal editorials. Using journal editorials about WHHD 2022 can help you highlight to others the importance of hand hygiene as an evidence-based action. You will be able to access many published by WHO and Professor Pittet through the WHO WHHD webpage. One example of a recent Lancet Infectious Diseases piece can be found here.

- You could also describe your health facility’s quality and safety climate or culture and how it has valued hand hygiene and IPC. By telling such stories you can explain to others how activities have supported sustained improvement. For example, you could share the aspects of the safety climate or culture that you think made a hand hygiene or IPC improvement happen – for example, the attitude of leaders, commitment of necessary resources, partnership working, sharing and transparency. You can share this information both locally (such as through focus groups and/or meetings and events) and with WHO by sending an email to: savelives@who.int.

- You can share the #handhygiene message far and wide. By using social media you can reach and amplify the need for ongoing hand hygiene action to prevent many avoidable infections in health care. Look out for and use the WHO social media materials when they are issued. You will find more on the WHO WHHD webpage shortly.
What will WHO do on 5 May 2022?

- A **WHO global webinar** on WHHD, 5 May 2022, at 13.30–15.30 CEST will include presentations with highlights from the new WHO global report on IPC, the new WHO hand hygiene research agenda and evidence on the role of an institutional quality and safety climate or culture for hand hygiene improvement and vice versa. The webinar will also include an opportunity for interaction between a panel of high-level experts and participants.

- A **free Webber teleclass** on WHHD, 5 May 2022, at 16:00–17:00 CET, led by Professor Didier Pittet (Director, Infection Control Programme, University Hospital of Geneva) and Dr Benedetta Allegranzi (IPC Technical Lead, WHO headquarters), will describe the theme of the campaign, highlighting the evidence and the promotional messages supporting it. Registration will open shortly.

**The 5 May WHHD 2022 campaign materials** mentioned in this newsletter and upcoming can be found the WHO WHHD webpage [here](#).
News from our partners

1. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) will celebrate this year’s International Day of the Midwife (IDM) on 5 May 2022 under the theme “100 Years of Progress”, since 2022 marks ICM’s centennial. The campaign acknowledges the progress from establishment of the first midwifery schools to the appointment of the first chief midwives and more women being able to access continuity of care from a known midwife. The IDM advocacy toolkit is available here.

2. Is your facility WASH FIT (using the Water and sanitation for health facility improvement tool)? This WHO/UNICEF webinar will take place on 26 April, at 13:00 CEST. Be the first to hear about the new and updated WASH FIT package, including country examples of improvements when using WASH FIT, and discuss plans for future implementation. You can register here.

3. In line with the WHHD 2022 theme of institutional safety climate or culture, the Global Alliance for Infections in Surgery has recently published a paper defining an organizational model for prevention and management of infections along the surgical pathway. The content perfectly aligns with the multimodal strategy and multidisciplinary approach promoted by WHO to prevent surgical site infection during the surgical patient journey, including hand hygiene. You can find WHO guidelines and implementation tools here.

4. Asia Pacific Society of Infection Control (APSIC)
APSIC will hold its 10th International Congress in Singapore on 28–31 July 2022 under the title IPC @ The Crossroads. Further details can be found here.