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Waitematā DHB leads the country in hand hygiene compliance

It can't be too difficult to remember to wash your hands – right?

But what if you had to do it each time you'd just shaken someone's hand, touched a door handle, answered a phone, pulled back a curtain or shifted a piece of furniture out of the way?

That's the kind of challenge facing health professionals up and down the country as they move around hospital wards and engage with patients – sometimes many dozens of times-a-day.

But it hasn't stopped Waitematā DHB from achieving the highest hand hygiene compliance rate in the country.

Latest figures released by Hand Hygiene NZ show Waitematā DHB achieved a phenomenal 90% compliance rate between April and June 2019 across more than 14,000 hand hygiene 'moments.'

"This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to hand hygiene and patient safety," CEO Dr Dale Bramley says. "We have a team of over 180 auditors, including doctors, who monitor compliance across all divisions and help to keep hand hygiene front-of-mind at a department level.

"We also have hand-sanitising dispensers throughout our hospitals and posters that serve as an additional reminder to everyone about the importance of hand hygiene.

"This kind of focus makes hand hygiene an integral part of our day-to-day culture and keeps us well ahead of the national benchmark compliance rate of 80%."

The Hand Hygiene New Zealand programme is run by the Health Quality & Safety Commission and is based on guidelines put in place by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Waitematā DHB provides biannual training so that 182 of its staff are equipped to carry out 100 audits each and every month. Results are reviewed by the DHB's Hand Hygiene Committee 12 times-a-year and plans are put in place to support staff to achieve best-practice.

"Clean hands help reduce any risk of infection that may be harmful to our patients and detrimental to their recovery," Dr Bramley says. "Maintaining the highest level of hand hygiene is part of our ongoing drive to provide a safe environment and best care to our patients."

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For further information, contact: Waitemata DHB Media Line (09) 487 1276

About Waitematā DHB

Waitematā DHB serves the largest population of any district health board in New Zealand, currently standing at more than 630,000 people. We have a workforce of more than 7,500 staff spread across more than 80 sites, including North Shore Hospital and Waitakere Hospital. We are also the Northern Region provider of forensic psychiatry and child disability services, plus the metro Auckland provider of child community dental services and community alcohol and drug services.