
HUMAN RESOURCES STANDARD PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Policy Name: Hand and Fingernail Hygiene Policy

Policy Purpose: In accordance with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines, long natural and artificial nails have been shown to harbor increased numbers of bacteria and fungi and have been associated with several outbreaks of nosocomial infections. Therefore, the use of artificial nails extenders or long nails are not permitted for direct patient care providers, food service personnel, those who work in the patient care environment, and those who handle patient equipment or specimens.

Policy Statement: It is the policy of Main Line Health that all employees have a responsibility for maintaining hand hygiene by adhering to specific infection control practices. Artificial fingernail enhancements and long natural nails increase the risk of transmitting infections to patients and are therefore prohibited for direct patient care providers, food service personnel, those who work in the patient care environment, and those who handle patient equipment or specimens.

Procedure:

- A. Fingernails are to be neatly manicured and of a reasonable length, not to exceed ¼", beyond the finger tip.
- B. Artificial nail enhancements are not to be worn. Nail polish is permitted except in Food and Nutrition Departments, but anything applied to natural nails other than polish is considered an enhancement. This includes, but is not limited to, artificial nails, tips, wraps, appliquéés, acrylics, gels and any additional items to the nail surface.
- C. Managers are responsible for monitoring and enforcing compliance.
- D. Non-compliance with this expectation will result in implementation of the Performance Management In A Just Culture Policy (Policy #2.10).

References: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for Hand Hygiene in Health Care Settings: Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee and the HICPAC/SHEA/APIC/IDSA Hand Hygiene Task Force. MMWR 2002; 51(NO.RR-16): 1-45.

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