**Hand Hygiene for People with Spinal Cord Injury**

Preventing COVID-19

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Version 2* | *March 25, 2020* |

*This advice is meant to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain supplies may be limited but you can still protect yourself and prevent infection using the cleaning products you have; soap and water is always better than nothing.*

**1) Hand washing basics**

* Soap and warm water: **20 seconds, all parts of hand** (front & back, under nails, between fingers, wrists), or
* Sanitizer (60% alcohol): cover **all parts of hand** (front & back, under nails, between fingers, wrists).
* Take care when you dry your hands; use single-use paper towels in a public place or a clean towel at home.
* **Avoid touching your face**; keep track of where you put your hands and clean those items/surfaces regularly.

The coronavirus (that causes COVID-19) can live for **hours or even days** on a variety of materials; be especially careful of **surfaces in public areas** that are touched by many people (elevator/door buttons, handrails, keypads, touchscreens, etc.).

**2a) Manual wheelchair users**

* **Wash your hands** frequently and whenever you enter your living space.
* Remove **gloves** first and clean them with a non-damaging product.
* After you wash your hands, be **careful about touching your tires**; if you need to transfer, you may want to use paper towels or clean cloths to cover your tires.
* Clean your **pushrims** as well, since you’re constantly touching them…anything that gets on your pushrims is very likely to get on your hands.
* Clean your **brake handles, push handles** and any other parts of your wheelchair that anyone touches with their hands.
* Clean your tires regularly, and try to **avoid making contact** between your hands and your tires when you’re pushing.

**2b) Power wheelchair users**

* **Wash your hands** frequently and whenever you enter your living space.
* If you’re not able to wash your hands, get **someone to help you** clean them with soap and water or sanitizer.
* Clean your **joystick** and any other **controls** (while taking care not to damage the electronics).
* Clean your **armrests, tray**, and any other parts of the wheelchair that your hands touch.

**3) Everyone**

* Clean your **cell phone** or other mobile device, and any parts of a **bag or backpack** that you touch.
* Clean your **keys, wallet**, and any **cards** you use in public places.

**4) Other assistive devices**

* Clean all parts of any **splints, cuffs, braces**, or **reachers**, or any other assistive device you touch with your hands.
* Clean the handles of your **cane** or **crutches**.
* Clean the **handgrips** and **brakes** of your walker or rollator, and any other part that you touch (such as a **storage compartment**).

**5) Using your mouth**

* If you have limited hand function, you may typically use your **mouth** to grasp and hold all kinds of things. Although it may be more difficult, it’s a good idea to find **other strategies** (including **asking for help** if necessary) so you can avoid using your mouth, ESPECIALLY with any object that **someone else** may have touched.

These measures may seem difficult and time-consuming, but it is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** for people living with SCI to prevent infection by the coronavirus. During the current emergency, taking **every possible measure** to protect yourself will help you stay healthy.

More information on COVID-19 and people living with SCI: [https://sciontario.org/covid-19-update](https://sciontario.org/covid-19-update/)