



Hand Washing Plus Gloves Curb Infections



Infections in premature babies may be prevented when attending medical staff wear nonsterile gloves after washing their hands, compared with only hand washing, findings of a new study show.

The study involved 120 extremely preterm babies in a neonatal ICU at a particular hospital. These infants were younger than eight days old and weighed less than 1kg and/or were delivered before 29 weeks of pregnancy. Half of the preterm babies were cared for by medical staff who wore gloves after hand washing; the other half were under the care of staff who used only hand washing.

Investigators looked at infections and cases of "necrotising enterocolitis" (or tissue death in the intestines) among the study infants. Their findings include:

- Late-onset infections (>72 hours after birth) or necrotising enterocolitis were found in 32 percent of infants in the hand washing/gloves group (versus 45 percent in the hand washing-only group);
- Infants in the hand washing/gloves group also had 64 percent fewer central line-associated bloodstream infections and 53 percent fewer gram-positive bloodstream infections.

The study, published online in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics*, was conducted by Dr. David Kaufman of the University of Virginia School of Medicine and his colleagues.

The results, although promising, show the need for further research to fully assess the use of gloves after hand washing, according to an accompanying editorial written by Dr. Susan Coffin of the University of Pennsylvania.

"It is important to recognise that universal glove use might lead to several unintended consequences," Dr. Coffin noted. "Glove use has been found by many investigators to be one of the key barriers to appropriate hand hygiene."

[Source: Jama](#)

Image credit: Wikipedia

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