

Assessing Handwashing Preconditions in Health Care Facilities

There are several preconditions that must be met before a campaign to change handwashing behaviours in healthcare settings can be implemented. The behavior-related precondition is that there are team members at the health care facility who do not wash their hands in all key situations (non-doers) – otherwise interventions for behavior change are not necessary. Infrastructure preconditions must be organized in such a way that the execution of the behavior is possible. Organizational preconditions are those that ensure that the health center team is able to conduct a behavior change process.

Precondition	Data source	Observation / Evaluation Question	What to do if the precondition is not given
1. Behavioural precondition			
Some staff members don't wash their hands in all key situations	Observations	Do staff members wash their hands with soap in the following situations: Before touching a patient; Before a clean/aseptic medical procedure; After a risk of exposure to bodily fluids ¹ ; After touching a patient; After touching a patient's environment.	Don't run a behavior change campaign on handwashing with soap. It is not necessary.
2. Infrastructural precondition			
Functional handwashing stations are present at the point of care	Observations	G-H1 ² . Do the places of care have a functional handwashing station?	Provide functional handwashing stations + perform maintenance activities
3. Organisational precondition			
Staff have the capacity to initiate a process of behavioural change	Interview with the head of the health care facility	Are you willing to dedicate 1 hour a week to the behavior change campaign? Do you support that short interviews with staff members be conducted? Do you approve of training sessions with staff members being held regularly during working hours for three months?	At the moment, this health centre does not have the capacity to initiate a process of behavioural change. Identify the reasons and respond to them.

¹ For example, after washing the patient, after examining a patient's mouth, after taking a blood test, etc.

² Where available, this tool uses existing indicators from the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP). This question corresponds to the G-H1 indicator.