

Hospitals seek high-tech help for hand hygiene

June 28 2013, by Jim Salter



In this Thursday, June 20, 2013 photo, Theresa Gratton, infection prevention coordinator at St. Mary's Health Center, wears a device to help remind health care workers to keep their hands clean at the hospital in Richmond Heights, Mo. In the past, hospitals have mostly relied on education, threats of discipline and reports from observers to try and make sure staff keep their hands clean but St. Mary's began testing the device about a year ago and officials say they've been stunned by how well the system works.(AP Photo/Jeff Roberson)

(AP)—Hospitals have fretted for years over how to make sure doctors,

nurses and staff keep their hands clean, but with only limited success. Now, some are turning to technology—buzzers, lights and tracking systems that remind workers to sanitize and chart those who don't.

Health experts say poor hand cleanliness is a factor in [hospital](#)-borne infections that kill tens of thousands of Americans each year. Hospitals have tried varying ways to promote better [hygiene](#).

Since last year, SSM St. Mary's Health Center in suburban St. Louis has been testing a system developed by Biovigil Inc., of Ann Arbor, Mich. A flashing light on badges worn by workers changes colors when hands have been cleaned and tracks compliance.

It is among several being tried at hospitals around the country.

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