

Study finds 5x increase in hand sanitizer use when located in hospital

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Placing alcohol-based hand sanitizers (AHS) in the middle of a hospital lobby floor in front of the visitor entrance increased visitor usage by 528 percent, according to a study published in the March issue of the *American Journal of Infection Control*, the official publication of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC).

Researchers from Clemson University and the Greenville Health System, Greenville, South Carolina conducted a three-week observational study at Greenville Memorial Hospital, in which they observed the AHS use of more than 6,600 visitors. They found usage of the hand sanitizer was 5.28 times higher when the dispenser was in the middle of the entrance versus near the information desk off to the side of the lobby.

Additionally, the study found that children and young adults visiting the [hospital](#) were nearly 50 percent more likely to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer than older adults. Those in groups, versus visitors who entered the hospital alone, were almost 40 percent more likely to clean their hands with the product.

"Visitors represent an additional vector by which healthcare-associated diseases can be transmitted to patients, and thus visitor hand hygiene is an opportunity to further improve patient safety," the study authors commented. "The study suggests many future research opportunities, including investigation into the effect of group dynamics and social pressure on visitor [hand sanitizer](#) utilization to identify strategies for

improving visitor hand hygiene."

The original location of the dispenser had zero visitor utilization and was not considered a possible study location. During the study period, the AHS dispenser was placed in a different location each week: (1) middle of the hospital entrance, right inside the revolving door; (2) in front of the information desk; and (3) between the main revolving door and the side door to the lobby. Visitors were observed during peak visiting hours (10-11:30 a.m. and 4-5:30 p.m.) on three different days each week.

More information: Mary A. Hobbs et al. Visitor characteristics and alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispenser locations at the hospital entrance: Effect on visitor use rates, *American Journal of Infection Control* (2016). DOI: [10.1016/j.ajic.2015.10.041](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajic.2015.10.041)

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