

# ACEP: emergency care providers have poor hand hygiene: survey

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(HealthDay)—Only 13 percent of emergency medical personnel say they clean their hands before touching patients, according to the results of a survey presented at the annual meeting of the American College of Emergency Physicians, held from Oct. 14 to 17 in Seattle.

Josh Bucher, M.D., from the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in Piscataway, N.J., and colleagues surveyed nearly 1,500 emergency care providers regarding their demographics and [hand washing](#) practices.

The researchers found that only 52 percent of the respondents—which included first responders, emergency medical providers, paramedics, and doctors—said that they wear gloves for every patient contact. Only 33 percent of emergency medical providers said they cleaned their hands after performing invasive procedures, and only 13 percent said they clean their hands before touching patients. In addition, only 13 percent of respondents said they cleaned their stethoscope between patients.

"In one of the largest studies of [emergency medical services](#) [EMS] provider [hand hygiene](#) to date, this study found several areas of EMS provider hand hygiene that are less than ideal," the authors write. "These are all very troubling findings, and they all identify areas where further education can provide direct results and increase [hygiene compliance](#) in these critical situations."

**More information:** [Abstract \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)  
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