

Recommendations for Alcohol Based Hand Rubs (ABHR) during COVID-19 Pandemic

The following information has been developed in response to the current COVID-19 Pandemic to assist safe management of ABHR provision at a time when normal supply routes are not available. Before COVID-19 the decanting of ABHR was not recommended because of the potential introduction of pathogens during the decanting process. Currently the supply of ABHR is often limited to containers of 5 litres or more, the following is intended to make the process of decanting suitable products as safe as possible.

Hand washing remains the backbone of good Standard Infection Control Practice, the addition of ABHR is intended to augment this not completely substitute good hand washing practice.

Some newly available or donated ABHR may not have emollients in them like the ABHR available pre COVID-19. These may cause new skin irritation, staff should be aware of this and take appropriate hand care if required.

All ABHR products must have at least 60% alcohol and used within 2 years of production to be effective. Stored in volumes of under 50 litres as to not present a fire hazard (WHO – ABHR Formulation and production)

When decanting of ABHR must be done the following should be considered

- The empty container must be clean and have a removable top – containers with fixed lids should be disposed of once empty.
- The ABHR should be decanted straight from large container into point of use container and not poured into a jug or suchlike beforehand.
- That the whole container is decanted into multiple clean point of use containers and that these are safely stored until required.
- A suitable clean and well-ventilated area should be identified for this purpose, not in dirty utility room/sluice.

Suggested Process

- Perform hand hygiene
- Don PPE gloves, apron and FRFM
- Clean the exterior of the empty container
- Remove the top from the empty container
- Fill container and replace top*
- Container should have date of decanting/ batch number/and staff initials recorded on label attached to container
- Decanted container is now ready for use or storage
- Doff PPE and perform hand hygiene

*When decanting from large container into personal use size container a clean funnel can be used, this must be cleaned and stored safely between uses.