



Standard Test Method for Determining the Virus-Eliminating Effectiveness of Hygienic Handwash and Handrub Agents Using the Fingerpads of Adults¹

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INTRODUCTION

Hands play an important role in the spread of many viruses. Thus, proper and regular hand hygiene is crucial in preventing such spread, particularly in health-care settings, day-care centers, and food-handling establishments. Many viruses that are known to spread through contaminated hands can remain infectious for several hours on human hands, and also may be more resistant than the bacteria commonly used to evaluate the microbicidal activity of handwash and handrub agents (**1, 2, 3, 4**).² Contaminated hands also can readily transfer infectious virus to other surfaces (**1, 2, 3**). Hand antisepsis has been shown to interrupt the spread of viral infections (**5**). Standardized methods to assess the virus-eliminating potential of handwash and handrub agents have not been available and this test method addresses the gap.

1. Scope

1.1 Human skin is not known to carry viruses as a part of its resident microbiota. Hands transiently contaminated with viruses can, however, act as vehicles for the spread of many types of viral infections. Hand hygiene is meant to reduce the load of viruses and other transient microorganisms on hands, thereby reducing the risk of disease transmission. Such reductions in the virus load may be due to a combination of virus inactivation and mechanical removal of infectious virus from the skin.

1.2 This test method is designed to determine the comparative virus-eliminating effectiveness of microbicidal or non-microbicidal formulations. This test method is not meant for use with surgical hand scrubs or preoperative skin preps.

NOTE 1—The test method should be performed by persons with training in virology in facilities designed and equipped for work with infectious agents at biosafety level 2 (**6**).

1.3 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as standard. No other units of measurement are included in this standard.

1.4 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the*

responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 *ASTM Standards*:³

E2011 Test Method for Evaluation of Hygienic Handwash and Handrub Formulations for Virus-Eliminating Activity Using the Entire Hand

E2276 Test Method for Determining the Bacteria-Eliminating Effectiveness of Hygienic Handwash and Handrub Agents Using the Fingerpads of Adults

E2613 Test Method for Determining Fungus-Eliminating Effectiveness of Hygienic Handwash and Handrub Agents Using Fingerpads of Adults

3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *hygienic (health-care personnel) handwash agents, n*—agents generally used for handwashing by personnel in hospitals, other health-care facilities, day-care centers, nursing homes, and food-handling establishments should be safe for repeated use, nonirritating, fast-acting, and efficient in eliminating transient microorganisms from intact skin.

¹ This test method is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee **E35** on Pesticides, Antimicrobials, and Alternative Control Agents and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee **E35.15** on Antimicrobial Agents.

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² The boldface numbers in parentheses refer to the list of references at the end of this standard.

³ For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, www.astm.org, or contact ASTM Customer Service at service@astm.org. For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.