

Fact Sheet

Perth District Health Unit

Routine Practices and Additional Precautions

Body fluids from an infectious person can spread illness. Body fluids include: a person's blood, vomit, stool (especially diarrhea), fluids from coughing and sneezing, semen, vaginal fluid, and urine. A person who does not look sick may still be able to spread illness. That is why it is important you use Routine Practices.

Routine Practices

Routine Practices are used to protect you from both body fluids and germs that may be on skin. Handwashing is a habit that you need to use with all patients and residents, regardless of what type of care they need.

Handwashing

Washing your hands is the easiest and most effective way of protecting yourself and others. It is important to keep your fingernails short and to not wear jewellery while you are working. Do not wear artificial nails.

Wash your hands:

- after going to the washroom
- before and after touching other people
- after contacting blood and other body fluids or touching items that have been soiled with body fluids
- right after removing gloves
- before and after handling food or before assisting someone to eat
- when your hands are visibly soiled
- after cleaning a patient's or resident's room, particularly the bathroom.

Hand sanitizer

Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can be used to replace handwashing in some situations. Follow the directions on the label as to the amount to use. Be sure to rub your hands until they are dry before moving on to other tasks.

In the following situations, you must wash your hands with soap and water:

- after using the washroom or assisting residents or patients with diapering or toileting
- when preparing food
- whenever your hands are visibly soiled.

Handle sharps carefully

Handle all sharps as minimally as possible. Do not re-cap needles. Place used needles and other sharps in a specially designed container.

Report incidents

If you are exposed to blood or body fluids through a needlestick injury or through a human bite, report it to your occupational health manager right away. Also follow up by reporting it to the Health Unit.

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Gloves

Gloves must be used properly to prevent illness from spreading. Gloves that are not removed and thrown away at the proper time can actually spread the germs. **Gloves must be taken off and thrown away in the resident's/patient's room immediately after the task is finished. Do not use the same gloves to care for a roommate, or wear the gloves outside the room. Wash your hands right away.**

Wear gloves:

- when providing care to a resident/patient where your hands are likely to contact their body fluids, such as those from coughing and sneezing
- when diapering or assisting a resident with toileting if the resident has loose stools or diarrhea
- when handling soiled laundry from an ill person. Bag the laundry in the room.
- when cleaning surfaces that have visible soil from body fluids on them, such as blood or diarrhea.

Do NOT wear gloves:

- when assisting someone to eat, giving them drinks or handing them medications, as long as they are not actively coughing or sneezing
- when holding someone, or touching their intact skin as long as there is no visible blood or an unexplained rash and they are not on contact precautions
- when cleaning surfaces that have no visible soil.

Do remember to wash your hands right away!

Gowns, masks and face-shields

Protecting your face is necessary if there is a possibility that it could be splashed with body fluids. Use a mask and face-shield or goggles.

Wear a gown with long sleeves when it is likely your clothing could be splashed with body fluids, such as when performing personal care on a resident who is coughing or sneezing, or one who has diarrhea and/or vomiting. The cuffs of the gloves should go over the cuffs of the gown. Remove the gown and discard it in the resident's/patient's room. Wash your hands.

Putting On and Taking Off PPE

When putting on PPE, always follow this sequence

- Perform hand hygiene
- Gown – making sure to fasten the neck and waist ties
- Mask – fastening ties so the mask is snug and covers your chin
- Goggles or Face Shield
- Gloves – making sure the glove covers the cuff of the gown

When taking off PPE, always follow this sequence

- Gloves – making sure your skin does not touch the outer surface of a glove
- Gown – making sure your skin does not touch the outer surface of the gown
- Perform hand hygiene
- Goggles or Face Shield
- Mask
- Perform hand hygiene