

IPC Bulletin for Staff providing Domiciliary Care (Care at Home)

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International Infection Prevention Week takes place on the third week of October each year and its aim is to raise awareness on how the role of infection prevention can improve patient safety. Although International Infection Prevention Week is one week of awareness, effective infection prevention and control (IPC) should be a high priority for care staff 365 days per year. The theme for this year's International Infection Prevention Week is:

Protecting Patients Everywhere!



9 ways to protect your service users

- Always practice good hand hygiene before and after providing care to your service users**
Use the '5 Moments of Hand Hygiene' and carry out hand hygiene appropriately for every care intervention. Support service users with their hand hygiene, e.g. prompting, assisting.
- Stay home if you are sick**
People requiring care at home are likely to be more susceptible to infections, e.g. due to age, low immunity, underlying conditions. If you have an infection, stay at home until you are well. Staff who have viral gastroenteritis should stay at home until they are 48 hours symptom free.
- Know if antibiotics are appropriate**
Help your service users to take antibiotics exactly as directed by the GP and ensure they complete the full course. Remember, antibiotics will not treat colds and viruses.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE)**
PPE should be used when caring for a service user with a known or suspected infection or when there is a risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids.
- Are vaccinations up-to-date?**
Staff should be up-to-date with their routine vaccinations. They should also get their annual flu jab to help protect their service users from Influenza.
- Laundry**
Do not shake used linen when making or stripping beds as micro-organisms will be dispersed into the air and contaminate the environment. Instead, fold sheets inwards and roll up to avoid 'shedding'. Avoid holding used linen and clothing against your body.
- Keep the service user's environment and equipment clean**
An unclean environment or piece of equipment provides the perfect breeding ground for bacteria. Help to support service users to keep their environment and equipment clean.
- Service user advice on infection control**
Infection prevention and control is everyone's responsibility, including service users and their families. Help them understand the importance of good infection control to keep themselves and other people safe, e.g. hand hygiene and cleanliness in the home.
- Know who your Infection Control Lead is**
It is a requirement under *The Health and Social Care Act: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* that every domiciliary care provider has an Infection Control Lead who can promote and monitor infection control practices. All members of staff should know who the nominated lead is and feel they can approach them for advice if required.

Have you had your flu jab yet?

Resources available at:

www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk

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