

# IPC Advice Bulletin for GP Practices

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To further support GP staff, here is some information on good infection prevention and control (IPC) practice.

## Bare Below the Elbows

It is best practice to be 'Bare Below the Elbows' (BBE) to facilitate good hand hygiene when delivering direct care to patients.

- BBE means being free from long-sleeved clothing, wrist and hand jewellery (other than one plain band ring).
- Nails should be clean and short, free from nail varnish, false or gel nails and nail jewellery.
- Dermal piercings below the elbow are not recommended as the jewellery will harbour bacteria.
- Long sleeves, if worn, should be rolled or pushed up to the elbows.

## Hand Hygiene Audit Tool

### NICE Quality statement<sup>1</sup>

People should receive healthcare from healthcare workers who decontaminate their hands immediately before and after every episode of direct contact or care.

Also as stated by NICE "Although hand hygiene has improved over recent years, remaining misconceptions about this standard principle of infection control are reported and good practice is still not universal". Therefore, sustained behaviour change and following good practice for hand hygiene is essential<sup>2</sup>. This can be achieved by undertaking hand hygiene audits.

Best practice is that all staff who have contact with patients should be assessed on their hand hygiene technique at least on an annual basis.

An Assessment Record for Hand Hygiene is available at [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk). Assessment records should be retained as evidence for CQC inspections.

## The gloves are off... FIRST!

When gloves and apron are worn, to minimise the risk of cross/self-contamination, gloves, which are potentially the most contaminated item of personal protective equipment (PPE), must always be removed first. Hands must then be decontaminated following the removal of all PPE.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Infection prevention and control*, NICE quality standard [QS61], April 2014

<sup>2</sup> Guise A, Schoonhoven L, Grol R, Finders R, Hulscher M, van Achterberg T. Impact of a team and leaders-directed strategy to improve nurses' adherence to hand hygiene guidelines: a cluster randomised trial. *Internal Journal Nursing Studies* 2013; 50: 464-474

<sup>3</sup> Loveday HP, et al, epic3: National Evidence-Based Guidelines for Preventing Healthcare-Associated Infections in NHS Hospitals in England *Journal of Hospital Infection* 86S1 (2014) S1-S70

## Resources available at:

[www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk)