

# IPC Bulletin for GP Practices

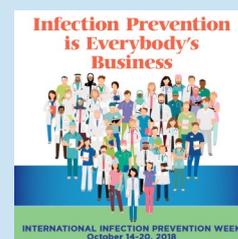
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**International Infection Prevention Week** takes place on the third week of October each year and its aim is to raise awareness on how the role of infection prevention can improve patient safety. Although International Infection Prevention Week is one week of awareness, effective infection prevention and control (IPC) should be a high priority for GP practices during every working day. The theme for this year's International Infection Prevention Week is: **Protecting Patients Everywhere!**



## 10 ways to protect your patients

1. **Always practice good hand hygiene before and after providing care to your patients**  
Use the '5 Moments of Hand Hygiene' and perform hand hygiene appropriately for every care intervention. All staff should be assessed at least annually on their hand hygiene technique.
2. **Stay home if you are sick**  
Help prevent the spread of infections such as viral gastroenteritis by making sensible decisions about when you are not well enough to work.
3. **Know if antibiotics are appropriate**  
Ensure antibiotics are prescribed appropriately, consider physical symptoms, test results and follow local guidelines. Educate your patients on antibiotic stewardship and encourage them to take prescribed antibiotics correctly.
4. **Follow all posters and precaution signs**  
Provide posters and information to help staff members and patients take adequate infection control measures, e.g. displaying a 'Hand hygiene Poster' at handwash basins, displaying a 'Cleaning notice Poster'.
5. **Use personal protective equipment (PPE)**  
PPE should be used when caring for patients with a known or suspected infection or when there is a risk of exposure to blood and/or body fluids.
6. **Are vaccinations up-to-date?**  
Practice staff and patients should be up-to-date with their routine vaccinations. Having an annual flu jab helps protect staff, patients and families from influenza. **Have you had your flu jab yet?**
7. **Using aseptic technique**  
Only staff trained and assessed in aseptic technique should undertake the procedure. Aseptic technique competency should be performed annually.
8. **Keep the environment and equipment clean**  
An unclean environment or piece of equipment provides the perfect reservoir for bacteria. Equipment should be cleaned between each patient use. Ensure the environment is free from clutter and damage to allow for effective cleaning.
9. **Patient advice on infection control**  
Infection prevention and control is everyone's responsibility, including patients. Empower patients to reduce the risk of acquiring an infection, or passing it onto others, by providing advice.
10. **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 Practice 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.



**Resources available at:**

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

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