

IPC Bulletin for Care Homes

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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 home staff 365 days per year. The theme for this year's International Infection Prevention Week is:

Protecting Patients Everywhere!



10 ways to protect your residents

- Always practice good hand hygiene before and after providing care to your residents**
Use the '5 Moments of Hand Hygiene' and carry out hand hygiene appropriately for every care intervention. All staff should be assessed at least annually on their hand hygiene technique. Support residents with their hand hygiene, e.g. prompting, assisting, providing skin wipes for those unable to access handwash basins.
- Stay home if you are sick**
Infections can spread easily in a care home setting. Residents are more susceptible to infections, e.g. due to age, low immunity, underlying conditions, close community setting. 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. Encourage visitors to do the same.
- Know if antibiotics are appropriate**
Help your residents to take antibiotics exactly as directed by the doctor and ensure they complete the full course. Remember, antibiotics will not treat colds and viruses.
- Follow all posters and precaution signs**
Support residents and visitors to follow information posters and precaution signs. Provide posters and information to help staff members and residents take adequate infection control measures, e.g. displaying a 'Hand hygiene Poster' at handwash basins, displaying a 'Cleaning notice Poster'.
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE)**
PPE should be used when caring for residents 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?**
Care staff and residents should be up-to-date with their routine vaccinations. Having an annual flu jab helps protect staff, residents and family from influenza.
Have you had your flu jab yet?
- Using aseptic technique**
Only staff trained and assessed in aseptic technique should undertake the procedure. Aseptic technique competency should be performed annually.
- Keep the resident's environment and equipment clean**
An unclean environment or piece of equipment provides the perfect breeding ground for bacteria. Shared equipment that is not decontaminated properly can spread infection between residents. Ensure the environment is free from clutter and damage, to allow for effective cleaning.
- Resident advice on infection control**
Infection prevention and control is everyone's responsibility, including residents and their visitors. Help them understand the importance of good infection control to keep themselves and other residents safe.
- 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 care home 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

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