

IPC Bulletin for Care Homes

Issue No. 36 - February 2022

Standard infection control precautions (SICPs)

'Hand hygiene' and 'Patient placement and assessment for infection risk'

This is the first in a series of bimonthly bulletins discussing the SICPs which form the basis of infection prevention and control measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection. Each bulletin will provide an introduction to 2 of the 10 SICPs. As it is often not possible to tell who has or is carrying an infection, it is essential that all staff apply safe systems of working at every opportunity. The SICPs are recommended for all staff, in all care settings, at all times, for all residents, whether infection is known to be present or not. More information on each of the SICPs can be found at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/standard-infection-control-precautions-policy-for-care-home-settings/. The SICPs are also covered in more detail in the 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for Care Homes'.

Hand hygiene

- Hand hygiene is one of the most important procedures for preventing the spread of infection.
- All staff should have training on hand hygiene, it is best practice that this is provided on a regular basis, e.g. annually. It is essential that everyone takes responsibility to ensure that the care provided is carried out in a safe manner.
- Residents should be encouraged to wash hands or use skin wipes after using the toilet and before eating and drinking.
- It is best practice to be 'Bare Below the Elbows' to facilitate effective hand hygiene when delivering direct care.
- The use of liquid soap, warm running water and paper towels, is sufficient in most circumstances.
- Alcohol based handrubs are a suitable alternative unless hands are visibly dirty or soiled, or when caring for residents with vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or *Clostridioides difficile*.
- Staff should know when to wash their hands and have an appropriate poster displayed in the home as a reminder, e.g. 'Your 5 moments for hand hygiene'.
- Hand hygiene is important **before** putting on and **after** removal of each item of personal protective equipment, e.g. pair of gloves, apron, or domestic gloves.
- It is recommended that, for assurance purposes, annual audits to assess the standard of staff hand hygiene are carried out. A 'Hand hygiene Audit Tool for Care Homes' is available to download at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/hand-hygiene-audit-tool-for-care-homes/.



Patient placement and assessment for infection risk

- Assessment for an infection risk and subsequent correct resident placement is an essential infection control practice to prevent the spread of infection in a care home.
- When a resident has a confirmed or suspected infection, they may require isolation in order to prevent spread to other residents.
- Residents who may present a potential risk include those with diarrhoea and/or vomiting, respiratory symptoms or fever.
- Transfer documentation, e.g. an [Inter-Health and Social Care Infection Control \(IHSCIC\) Transfer Form](#) or patient passport, must be completed for all transfers, internal or external, and whether the resident presents an infection risk or not.

Queen's Nursing Institute IPC Champions Network

The next event is Thursday 31st March, 2-4pm via Zoom, network members can register at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infection-prevention-and-control-ipc-network-meeting-tickets-242743330837

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk
Call us on 01423 557340

