

# IPC Bulletin for GP Practice staff

Issue No. 37 - February 2022

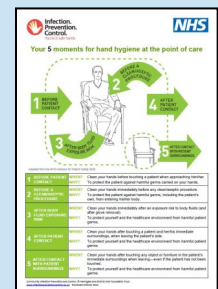
## Standard infection control precautions (SICPs)

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

This is the first of 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 primary care settings, at all times, for all patients, 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/sicps-tbps-standard-infection-control-precautions-transmission-based-precautions-general-practice/](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/sicps-tbps-standard-infection-control-precautions-transmission-based-precautions-general-practice/). The SICPs are also covered in more detail in the 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for General Practice 4th Edition'.

### 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.
- It is best practice to be 'Bare Below the Elbows' to facilitate effective hand hygiene when delivering direct care.
- Use liquid soap, warm running water and paper towels, for routine handwashing.
- Alcohol based handrub containing a minimum of 60% isopropyl alcohol is an effective alternative to handwashing and is useful when there is a need for rapid hand disinfection. It is not effective if hands are visibly dirty or soiled, or when caring for people with vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or *Clostridioides difficile*.
- An antimicrobial solution should be used prior to an invasive procedure.
- Staff should know when to wash their hands and have an appropriate poster displayed in the Practice 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.
- 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 General Practice' is available to download at [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/hand-hygiene-audit-tool-for-general-practice/](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/hand-hygiene-audit-tool-for-general-practice/).



### Patient placement and assessment for infection risk

- Assessment for an infection risk and subsequent correct patient placement is an essential infection control practice to prevent the spread of communicable disease within General Practice.
- Where possible, arrangements should be made to see an infectious patient virtually, e.g. using a smart phone, tablet or computer, or in their own home.
- If the patient needs to be seen in the Practice, patients with specific infections, such as chicken pox, measles, influenza, or COVID-19 during a pandemic, should be isolated in a separate area or room away from other patients so that the risk of infection to others in waiting or communal areas is minimised.
- Staff preparing to transfer a patient to another health or social care provider should complete transfer documentation, e.g. the [Inter-Health and Social Care Infection Control Transfer Form](#) or patient passport, and inform them of the patient's status prior to the transfer.

#### What's new:

**IPC CQC inspection preparation Pack for General Practice** (Community Infection Prevention and Control, November 2021) - includes information on the new 'National Standards of Healthcare Cleanliness 2021'.

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download.

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

Call us on 01423 557340.

