

IPC Bulletin for Staff providing Domiciliary Care

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Standard infection control precautions (SICPs)

'Safe management of linen' and 'Safe disposal of waste, including sharps'

This is the third in a series of 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 provides 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 service users, 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-and-tbps-policy-for-domiciliary-care-staff/. The SICPs are also covered in more detail in the 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for Domiciliary Care staff'.

Safe management of linen, including uniforms and workwear

- It is important to handle used linen with care as service user's sheets, bedding, towels and clothing can become soiled with urine, faeces or other body fluids and microorganisms, such as bacteria and viruses.
- Disposable apron and gloves should be worn when handling used, soiled or infected linen and clothing.
- Do not shake used linen when making or stripping beds.
- Always wash your hands after removal gloves when you have handled used linen.
- Do not rinse soiled bedding by hand, but use the prewash cycle on the service user's or communal washing machine.
- If the washing machine and drier are in the kitchen, do not sort laundry and prepare food at the same time.
- Uniforms and workwear should be laundered separately from other clothing on a hot wash cycle at the highest temperature that the fabric will tolerate.

Safe disposal of waste, including sharps

- Waste is potentially hazardous and, if not disposed of correctly, can result in injury or infection.
- All staff are responsible for the safe management and disposal of waste.
- Any waste that is generated in the care of a service user, such as catheter bags, continence pads, personal protective equipment, should be disposed of as per local policy. Waste will usually be disposed of as household waste, unless alternative arrangements are in place with the Local Authority.
- Even if you do not use sharps in your role, you still need to be aware of safe practice as service users may have sharps in their own home, especially if they are diabetic and take insulin.
- Whoever uses the sharp is responsible for its disposal, e.g. a self-injecting service user.
- Sharps should be disposed of immediately after use into an appropriate sharps container which conforms to UN3291 and British Standards BS7320.



What's new:

- **National infection prevention and control manual for England** updated 1st September, 2022, version 2.2 www.england.nhs.uk/publication/national-infection-prevention-and-control/
- **IPC training event for Domiciliary Care and Care Homes** 10th October, 2022 @ £150.00 per delegate www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infection-prevention-and-control-training-event-for-care-homes-tickets-379787182687

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

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