

# IPC Bulletin for Care Homes

Issue No. 40 - November 2022

## Standard infection control precautions (SICPs)

### 'Safe management of care equipment' and 'Safe management of the care environment'

This is the fourth 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 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/](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/standard-infection-control-precautions-policy-for-care-home-settings/) and also [www.england.nhs.uk/national-infection-prevention-and-control-manual-nipcm-for-england/chapter-1-standard-infection-control-precautions-sicps/#1-6](http://www.england.nhs.uk/national-infection-prevention-and-control-manual-nipcm-for-england/chapter-1-standard-infection-control-precautions-sicps/#1-6). The SICPs are covered in more detail in the 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for Care Homes 11th Edition'.

### Safe management of care equipment

Care equipment can become contaminated with blood, body fluids and microorganisms, such as bacteria and viruses, and result in transmission of infection to other residents. To prevent this from occurring:

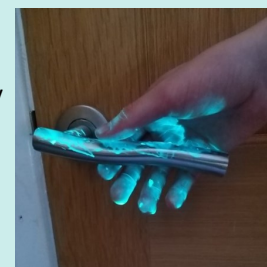
- Dispose of '**single use**' items after use. These items, e.g. medicine pots, are labelled single use or packaged with the symbol shown and are intended for one time use.
- '**Single patient use**' items, e.g. hoist slings, should be laundered regularly and whenever visibly soiled. These should not be used by another resident.
- Decontaminate all surfaces (including the underneath surface and frames) of '**reusable non-invasive equipment**', e.g. wheelchairs, shower chairs, in line with manufacturer's instructions, and:
  - ⇒ Between each use/between residents
  - ⇒ After contamination with blood or body fluids
  - ⇒ At regular intervals as part of an equipment cleaning protocol
  - ⇒ Before inspection, servicing or repair
- Clean using an 'S' shaped pattern from clean to dirty, top to bottom, taking care not to go over the same area twice. This reduces the amount of microorganisms that may be transferred from a dirty area to a clean area.



[www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/safe-management-of-care-equipment-audit-tool-for-care-homes/](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/safe-management-of-care-equipment-audit-tool-for-care-homes/)

### Safe management of the care environment

- A clean environment reduces the risk of transmission of infection posed by microorganisms. Outbreaks of infection have been associated with environmental contamination.
- Microorganisms can be found in dust and dirt, so cleaning or vacuuming alone can significantly reduce the amount of microorganisms in the care environment.
- Hands regularly come into contact with surfaces. If hands are not decontaminated, they will transfer any organisms present. Regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces is important.
- Warm water and a general purpose neutral detergent or detergent wipes are suitable for routine cleaning.
- Disinfectants should be used in areas where the resident has a confirmed or suspected infection.



[www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/safe-management-of-the-care-environment-audit-tool-for-care-homes/](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/safe-management-of-the-care-environment-audit-tool-for-care-homes/)

#### What's new

- QNI IPC Champions Network event: 25/01/23, 2.00-4.00pm via Zoom. To book please visit [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infection-prevention-and-control-ipc-network-meeting-tickets-453873386517](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/infection-prevention-and-control-ipc-network-meeting-tickets-453873386517)
- Viral gastroenteritis/Norovirus Policy for Care Home settings [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/viral-gastroenteritis-norovirus-policy-for-care-home-settings/](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/viral-gastroenteritis-norovirus-policy-for-care-home-settings/)

Visit our website to find lots of IPC resources, many of which are free to download at [www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk](http://www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk)

Call us on 01423 557340

