

IPC Bulletin for GP Practice staff

Issue No. 41 - 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 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/ and also 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 also covered in more detail in the 'Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for General Practice 4th Edition'.

Safe management of care equipment

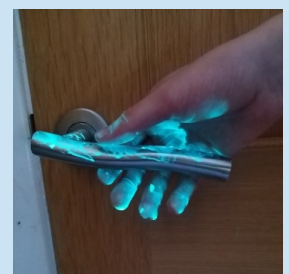
- It is essential that decontamination of reusable medical devices and care equipment after use on a patient is undertaken to prevent the transmission of infection. This is in accordance with the requirements of *The Health and Social Care Act 2008: Code of Practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance (The Code of Practice)*.
- Some disinfectant products can damage plastic surfaces of medical devices and care equipment if they are not compatible with the surface material, therefore, always check with the manufacturer's instructions.
- When cleaning and disinfecting, use 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.
- A disinfectant does not act immediately - to ensure efficacy, follow the manufacturer's guidance on contact time.
- Items intended for 'single use', e.g. auroscope ear piece, are labelled 'single use' or with this symbol.
- Items packaged as 'single patient use', e.g. nebuliser mask, spacers, can be decontaminated and used again on the same patient, but cannot be used on another patient.
- Decontaminate 'reusable non-invasive care equipment', e.g. blood pressure cuffs, wheelchairs, in line with manufacturer's instructions and between each use, after contamination with blood or body fluids, at regular intervals as part of an equipment cleaning protocol and before inspection, servicing or repair.



www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/safe-management-of-care-equipment-audit-tool-for-general-practice/

Safe management of the care environment

- *The Code of Practice* requires that registered providers of health and social care 'provide and maintain a clean and appropriate environment in managed premises that facilitates the prevention and control of infections' and must adequately resource local provision of cleaning.
- A clean environment reduces the cumulative risk of transmission of infection posed by microorganisms, such as bacteria and viruses, in that environment.
- Hands regularly come into contact with surfaces. If hands are not decontaminated, they will transfer any organisms present. This risk is always present, but will increase if environmental cleaning is neglected.



www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/resources/safe-management-of-the-care-environment-audit-tool-for-general-practice/

What's new:

- Updates to the Community IPC 'Hand hygiene', 'Notifiable diseases' and 'Specimen collection' Policies for General Practice available at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk/gp-practices/policies/
- Save the date: **27 March 2023** IPC training event for General Practice

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

www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk

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