



Community Infection Prevention and Control Policy for General Practice

(also suitable for adoption by other healthcare providers,
e.g. Dental Practice, Podiatry)

SICPs and TBPs (Standard infection control precautions and Transmission based precautions)

SICPs and TBPs

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Organisation:

Signature: Name:

Job title:

Adoption date:

Review date:

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SICPs and TBPs

SICPs AND TBPs (STANDARD INFECTION CONTROL PRECAUTIONS AND TRANSMISSION BASED PRECAUTIONS)

1. Introduction

This Policy reflects the 'Standard infection control precautions' (SICPs) and 'Transmission based precautions' (TBPs) in the *National infection prevention and control manual (NIPCM) for England*.

SICPs must be used by all Practice staff in all situations for contact with patients, their environment or equipment. SICPs are the foundation for safe practice and break the chain of infection which protects patients, visitors and staff. There is often no way of knowing who is infected, so by applying SICPs to all people at all times, best practice becomes second nature and the risk of infection is minimised.

SICPs may be insufficient to prevent transmission of specific infectious agents. Therefore, additional 'Transmission based precautions' (TBPs) are required for patients with a confirmed or suspected infection or colonisation.

When caring for patients in relation to any new or emerging infection, staff should refer to the latest national infection prevention and control guidance.

2. Hand hygiene

Hand hygiene is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infection. Good hand hygiene should be undertaken by all staff and patients.

Refer to the 'Hand hygiene Policy for General Practice'.

3. Patient placement and assessment for infection risk

Prior to a patient's transfer to another health or social care facility, an assessment for infection risk must be undertaken. This ensures appropriate placement of the patient.

Refer to the 'Patient placement and assessment for infection risk Policy for General Practice'.

4. Personal protective equipment

Before undertaking any procedure, staff should assess any likely exposure to blood and/or other body fluids, non-intact skin or mucous membranes or substances hazardous to health, e.g. cleaning/disinfecting products, and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) that protects adequately against the risks associated with the procedure.

Avoiding overuse or inappropriate use of PPE is a key principle that ensures this is risk-based and minimizes its environmental impact. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to the environmental impact of sustainable or reusable PPE options versus single-use PPE.

Refer to the 'Personal protective equipment Policy for General Practice'.

5. Respiratory and cough hygiene

Respiratory and cough hygiene can help reduce the risk of spreading respiratory infections, protecting patients, visitors and staff.

Staff should adopt good respiratory and cough hygiene practices themselves and promote them to patients.

Refer to the 'Respiratory and cough hygiene Policy for General Practice'.

6. Safe disposal of waste, including sharps

All staff are responsible for the safe management and disposal of waste, including sharps. All contaminated waste and used sharps should be correctly segregated and disposed of to prevent injury or infection.

Refer to the 'Safe disposal of waste, including sharps Policy for General Practice'.

7. Safe management of blood and body fluid spillages

All spillages of blood and body fluids must be dealt with promptly. Best practice is to use an appropriate spillage kit as per manufacturer's instructions. It is important to regularly check that the spillage kit is within the expiry date. Refer to the 'Safe management of blood and body fluid spillages Policy for General Practice'.

8. Safe management of care equipment

Cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation are known as decontamination. Safe decontamination of care equipment after use on a patient is an essential part of routine infection control to prevent the spread of infection.

Refer to the 'Safe management of care equipment Policy for General Practice'.

9. Safe management of linen, including uniforms and workwear

The use of linen such as blankets, pillowcases, fabric hand towels, in General Practice is not recommended as it is not practical to launder items between each patient. Best practice is to use disposable paper products, e.g. paper towels, couch roll.

All fabric blinds, curtains and screens should be visibly clean with no blood, bodily substances, dust, dirt, debris stains or spillages.

Refer to the 'Safe management of linen, including uniforms and workwear Policy for General Practice'.

10. Safe management of sharps and inoculation injuries

This is referred to as 'Occupational safety/managing prevention of exposure (including sharps)' in the *NIPCM*.

Sharps are items that could cause cuts or puncture wounds and include needles and sharp instruments. It is the responsibility of the user to dispose of sharps safely into a sharps container. Sharps injuries must be dealt with immediately to reduce the risk of transmission of infection.

Refer to the 'Safe management of sharps and inoculation injuries Policy for General Practice'.

11. Safe management of the care environment

The *Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance* 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’.

Refer to the ‘Safe management of the care environment Policy for General Practice’.

12. Transmission based precautions

SICPs may be insufficient to prevent transmission of specific infections. Therefore, additional TBPs may need to be taken by staff when caring for patients with a confirmed or suspected infection or colonisation. Decisions on the need for TBPs must be based on the:

- Confirmed or suspected infectious agent
- Severity of the illness caused
- Transmission route of the infectious agent
- Procedures undertaken

TBPs are categorised by the route of transmission of the infection (some infections can be transmitted by more than one route). Application of TBPs may differ depending on the confirmed or suspected infection.

Contact precautions

These are utilised to prevent and control infections which are spread via direct contact with the patient, or indirectly from the patient’s immediate care environment and care equipment. This is the most common route of infection transmission.

Droplet precautions

These are utilised to prevent and control infections which are spread over short distances (at least 1 metre) predominantly via droplets from the respiratory tract of one individual directly onto a mucous membrane, e.g. eyes, nose, mouth, of another individual. Droplets can penetrate the respiratory system to above the alveolar level.

Airborne precautions

These are utilised to prevent and control infections which are spread without necessarily having close patient contact via aerosols from the respiratory tract of one individual directly onto a mucous membrane, e.g. eyes, nose, mouth, of another individual. Aerosols can travel deeper into the respiratory system than droplets, to the endpoint (alveoli).

13. Infection Prevention and Control resources, education and training

The Community IPC Team have produced a wide range of innovative

educational and IPC resources designed to assist your General Practice in achieving compliance with the *Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infection and related guidance* and CQC registration requirements.

These resources are either free to download from the website or available at a minimal cost covering administration and printing:

- 27 IPC Policy documents for General Practice
- Preventing Infection Workbook: Guidance for General Practice
- IPC CQC inspection preparation Pack for General Practice
- IPC audit tools, posters, leaflets and factsheets
- IPC Bulletin for General Practice Staff

In addition, we hold educational study events in North Yorkshire.

Further information on these high quality evidence-based resources is available at www.infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk.

14. References

Department of Health and Social Care (Updated December 2022) *Health and Social Care Act 2008: code of practice on the prevention and control of infections and related guidance*

NHS England (2022, updated 2023) *National infection prevention and control manual (NIPCM) for England*

NHS England and NHS Improvement (April 2021) *National Standards of Healthcare Cleanliness 2021*