

Routine Practices

Routine Practices help prevent the spread of infections. These practices apply when interacting with patients¹ whether in Alberta Health Services (AHS) facilities or community settings. Use Routine Practices for every patient, every time, regardless of their diagnosis or infectious status.



[Infection Prevention and Control Risk Assessment \(IPC RA\):](#)

Before providing care to any patient, assess the risk of spreading infection:

- Note any possible contact you may have with blood or body fluids (e.g., coughing, bleeding, runny nose, or soiled clothing, equipment or environment).
- Perform [hand hygiene](#) and put on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) before providing care.



Hand hygiene is the single most important step in preventing infections

- Perform [hand hygiene](#) by using alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water.
- Use ABHR for [hand hygiene](#) unless hands are visibly soiled.
- Use plain soap and water when:
 - Hands are visibly soiled
 - Caring for patients¹ with diarrhea and/or vomiting.
- Keep fingernails natural, clean, healthy and short. There are restrictions on nail enhancements and jewelry. Check the [AHS Hand Hygiene Policy](#) for more information.
- Use only AHS-approved ABHR, soap, and hand lotion.
- Follow the steps for performing [hand hygiene](#) found in the [AHS Hand Hygiene Procedure](#).
- Perform [Hand Hygiene](#):
 - Before contact with a patient or patient's environment
 - Before a clean or aseptic procedure
 - After exposure or risk of exposure to blood or body fluids
 - After contact with a patient or patient's environment.
- Educate patients and visitors about how and when to use [hand hygiene](#) products.

¹ Patients are all persons who receive or have requested healthcare or services. The terms "client" or "resident" may also be used, depending on the healthcare setting.



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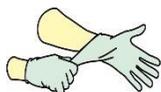


Infection Prevention
& Control



Accommodation

- When room-sharing:
 - Follow IPC recommendations for [Cohorting](#).
 - Change PPE (if worn) between each patient interaction and treat each patient space as a private room.
 - Remove PPE (if worn) and perform hand hygiene when leaving one bed space or before providing care to the other patients in the room.
 - Separate patient beds by minimum of 2 meters whenever possible.



Personal protective equipment: Gloves

- Wear non-sterile gloves, to:
 - Help protect your hands from contact with blood, body fluids, excretions, secretions, mucous membranes or non-intact skin of patients
 - Handle dirty or potentially contaminated items
 - Protect your hands if you have non-intact skin (e.g., open cuts, lesions or rashes).
- Perform [hand hygiene](#) before accessing and putting on and immediately after taking them off.
- Gloves are single-use. Use only once, then dispose of them immediately after use.
- Change gloves between care activities for the same patient (e.g. when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site).
- Never wear gloves outside a patient room or bed space unless transporting contaminated items or when cleaning spills of blood or body fluids.
- Remove damaged gloves as soon as possible and perform [hand hygiene](#).
- Never wash gloves or use ABHR while wearing gloves.
- Sterile gloves are for sterile procedures.

Refer to the AHS [Donning](#) and [Doffing](#) PPE posters for details on careful removal and disposal of gloves.

For more detailed information on glove use see [Glove Use and Selection: IPC Best Practice Guidelines](#) or [Proper Glove Use as part of Personal Protective Equipment](#).

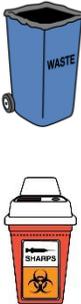


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|   | <h3>Personal protective equipment: Gowns</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear a gown to protect exposed skin and clothing during activities likely to cause: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Splashes of fluids Contact with blood or body fluids (e.g., wound drainage). Perform hand hygiene before accessing and putting on and immediately after taking off a gown. Remember to fasten the tie strings at the neck and the waist. Make sure the sleeves cover your wrists. Do not use gowns as housecoats or warm-up jackets. Do not wear gowns outside patient rooms/bed spaces unless transporting contaminated items. Remove soiled gown as soon as possible. Do not reuse gowns. After removing gown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place in waste container if disposable; do not tear or rip to remove Place in linen bag if reusable, and Perform hand hygiene. <p>Refer to the AHS Donning and Doffing PPE posters for details on careful removal and disposal of gowns.</p> |
|   | <h3>Personal protective equipment: Facial (masks and eye) protection</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wear facial (mask and eye) protection to protect your mouth, nose and eyes during activities likely to cause splashes. If you need a mask, you also need eye protection (e.g., goggles, face shields, visors attached to masks). Perform hand hygiene before accessing and putting on and immediately after taking off facial protection. Proper wearing of a mask includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring a snug fit over the nose and under the chin Moulding the metal bar over the nose Wearing the mask with the moisture-absorbing side closest to the face Changing the mask when it is moist Careful removal after use, touching only the elastic or ties without tearing or ripping the mask Not wearing masks around the neck. |



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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription glasses do not meet Workplace Health and Safety Regulations for eye protection. • Clean and disinfect re-useable eye protection after each use. Use and Re-use of Eye Protection • Discard single-use masks and eye protection in waste containers. <p>Refer to the AHS Donning and Doffing PPE posters for details on careful removal and disposal of masks and eye protection.</p> |
|  | <p><u>Respiratory Hygiene:</u> Cover Your Cough, Clean Your Hands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. • Use the tissue once then dispose of it immediately, and perform hand hygiene. • If tissues are not readily available, cough or sneeze into your upper arm or elbow. |
|  | <p>Handling Patient Care Items and Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring minimal supplies into patient rooms, tub rooms, and treatment rooms. • Discard items labelled as single use after use on one patient. • Use disposable patient equipment when possible. • Dedicate re-useable equipment for a single patient use only, until discharge (e.g., thermometers, blood pressure equipment). • If reusable equipment cannot be dedicated for a single patient use, clean and disinfect it between patients. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer to manufacturer’s instructions for equipment-specific cleaning information. • Additional Precaution rooms should contain a dedicated linen bag, double bag only if leaking. • Do not share toys, electronic games, and books that cannot be cleaned and disinfected. • Clean and disinfect shared tubs and showers immediately after use as per AHS procedures. • Used meal trays and dishes do not require special handling. Place on the dietary cart or in an area designated for used dishes. Disposable dishes and utensils are not required. • After patients are discharged, transferred or additional precautions are discontinued, clean/disinfect reusable equipment, discard single-use supplies that remain and launder unused linens. |



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|  | <p>Environmental cleaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean patient care areas on a regularly scheduled basis and after patient discharge. • Use AHS approved products and procedures. <p>Refer to AHS Linen and Environmental Services documents for specific cleaning schedules and practices.</p> |
|  | <p>Patient ambulation outside room, bed space or transfer</p> <p>Before patients leave their room, educate or assist them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perform hand hygiene ○ Practice respiratory hygiene if coughing or sneezing ○ Put on clean clothing or hospital gown/housecoat ○ Ensure dressings and incontinence products contain body fluids or drainage. <p>Transport Staff should assess the risk of spreading infection and choose clean personal protective equipment (PPE) if necessary, to handle the patient during transport and at the transport destination, using Infection Prevention and Control Risk Assessment (IPC RA).</p> |
|  | <p>Visitors</p> <p>Encourage visitors to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perform hand hygiene on entry and exit to the facility ○ Practice respiratory hygiene while visiting ○ Reschedule visits when feeling unwell. |
|  | <p>Waste and sharps handling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear gloves to remove waste from patient rooms, treatment rooms or if the outside of the bag is soiled. • Avoid contact with body. • Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene. • Remember: New Needle, New Syringe, Every Time! • Dispose of sharps immediately after use in a puncture-proof, biohazard container. • Do not overfill waste or sharps container. • Follow AHS waste management sorting and disposal guidelines. |

