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## Infection Prevention and Control

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to inform all staff of their responsibilities in regard to compliance with Hiqa and promoting client/patient safety by helping to prevent healthcare acquired infections, taking the correct actions if faced with caring for people with diagnosed or potential infections and promoting practice that reduces the risk of infection.

The policy also aims to ensure that service users and their relatives or carers have confidence in the infection control and prevention practices.

### Policy Statement

Infection prevention and control is one of the most important tasks facing social and health care services. In order to minimise the risk of transmitting infection it is necessary to consider each service user as potentially infectious. With this in mind, it is more likely that appropriate infection control measures will be taken.

### Scope of Policy

This policy is to be followed by all staff working for myhomecare.ie

### Individual Staff Members

- Be aware of and comply with myhomecare.ie policies procedures and guidance
- Promote confidentiality, sharing information with partners on a need to know basis
- Take part in training, including attending updates so that they maintain their skills and are familiar with procedures
- All practitioners registered and non registered should access regular supervision and support in line with local procedures
- All staff should maintain accurate comprehensive and legible records, with records being stored securely in line with local guidance

### Occupational Health/GP

The role of the occupational health department and/or GP is to:

- Ensure any health screening has been undertaken to ensure the proposed employees do not pose an infection risk to clients or colleagues when commencing work with the company, e.g. tuberculosis screening or hepatitis vaccination
- Review the health of workers after illness to ensure readiness to return to work and suitability to return to previous work
- Monitor ongoing protection against certain infections such as hepatitis
- Provide booster injections such as hepatitis B
- Monitor the effectiveness of post exposure prophylaxis

Please note that GPs may charge the member of staff for the provision of vaccines – GPs do not have to provide vaccines such as hepatitis B free of charge.

### Assessment of risk

Assessment of risk and planning are integral to infection prevention and control and health staff will be expected to contribute to these processes.

### Standard precautions

Infection Control is based on the use of practices and procedures that prevent, or reduce, the risk of infection being transmitted from a source of infection (e.g. a person, contaminated body fluids, equipment, the environment etc.) to a susceptible individual.

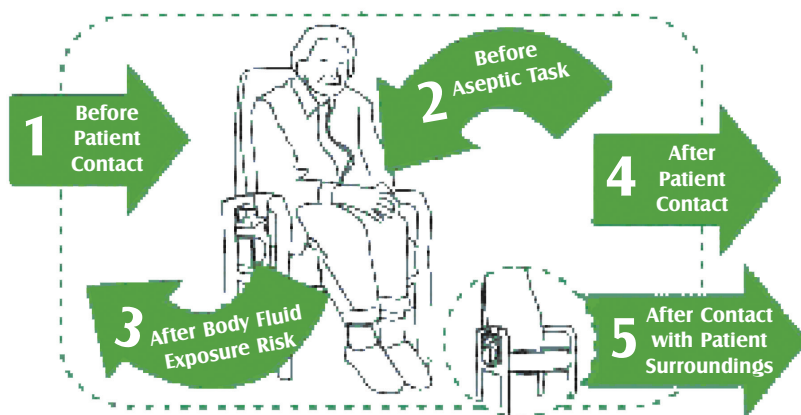
In order to safeguard the health and safety of all service users and Myhomecare.ie workers, it is essential that good working practices are adapted at all times. This involves careful handling of all blood and body fluids from all service users, regardless of whether a risk of infection has been identified or not

- Apply good basic hygiene practices with regular hand decontamination (washing with soap and warm water or use of alcohol hand gel)
- Hand decontamination should be practised between contacts with all service users
- Cover existing wounds or skin lesions with waterproof dressings
- Appropriate protective clothing, e.g. disposable gloves and plastic aprons must be worn when in contact with blood and body fluids
- Protect the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth from blood splashes
- Staff should treat all blood/body fluids as potentially infectious
- All blood spillages should be cleaned and disinfected immediately with the detergent that is available in the service user's home
- Sharps **MUST NOT** be re-sheathed or recapped, but must be placed directly into an approved sharps container **BY THE USER**, preferably where used
- Hazardous/infectious waste must be disposed of according to the waste management policy
- If you have symptoms of gastroenteritis, consult your GP. Do not return to work until you are symptom free for 48 hours.
- Report any illness such as diarrhoea, vomiting, chicken pox, shingles or flu to your line manager.

Below details specific requirements for each of the standard precautions.

## Hand hygiene

### YOUR 5 MOMENTS FOR HAND HYGIENE



You can use either liquid soap and water or alcohol hand rub for the above. Alcohol handrub should **not** be used under the following circumstances:

- Hands are visibly soiled
- The service user is experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- There is direct hand contact with any body fluids
- There is known Norovirus, Clostridium difficile, MRSA or other diarrhoeal illnesses

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Wash hands prior to putting on PPE and after removal of PPE. Wear aprons during direct service user contact and use gloves and aprons if in contact with blood and body fluids.

### **Sharps management**

- Do not re-sheath needles
- Dispose of needles and syringes as one unit
- Always take a sharps container to the point of use
- Dispose of sharps boxes either when 3/4 full.

### **Blood and body fluid spillages**

- Clean up blood and body fluid spillages promptly
- Wear protective equipment (gloves and apron where necessary).
- For blood spillages use a bleach solution
- For body fluid spillages use a bleach product and dilute
- For urine spillages use hot soapy water as poisonous fumes may be produced if a bleach product is used.

### **Waste management**

Wear personal protective equipment when handling and during disposal of waste. All staff are responsible for the safe management and disposal of waste.

### **Laundry Care**

The service user's family would be expected to manage the laundry needs for the service user however they may require guidance on laundering linen that has been soiled or is infected.

If staff have to deal with soiled or dirty linen, wear personal protective equipment.

Advise service user's family to wash all laundry at the correct temperatures, as per instructions found on the linen.

### **Decontamination of equipment**

As most care is delivered in a service user's own home it is expected that equipment will be used for each service user on an individual basis until it is no longer required. Where staff are required to use equipment between service users these should be cleaned according to manufacturer's instructions. Cleaning may be with warm soap and water or an alcohol based solution, where appropriate.

### **Prevention of blood borne viruses (BBV)**

Immunisation (vaccination) is available against Hepatitis B virus but not other BBVs such as HIV. The need for a worker to be immunised should be determined by risk assessment however nurses or care workers providing care in the community should be offered protection. It should be seen as a supplement to reinforce other control measures. A vaccination record must be kept.

### **Action after possible infection with a BBV**

If you are contaminated with blood or other body fluids, take the following action without delay:

- Wash splashes off your skin with soap and running water
- If your skin is broken, encourage the wound to bleed, do not suck the wound – rinse thoroughly under running water
- Wash out splashes in your eyes using tap water or an eye wash bottle, and your nose or mouth with plenty of tap water – do not

- swallow the water
- Record the source of contamination
- Report the incident to your Homecare Manager

Should this happen, contact your Homecare Manager immediately then attend accident and emergency urgently as prompt medical advice is important. The circumstances of the incident need to be assessed and consideration given to any medical treatment required. An incident form should be completed as a priority and reported via the incident reporting procedures.

### **Outbreaks of infectious diseases**

At times where there are outbreaks of infectious diseases, myhomecare.ie will implement its business continuity plan. All staff must reassess the care needs of their clients in order to prioritise caring for those most in need during a period where staffing levels are reduced.

Myhomecare.ie will offer its workers as much protection from the infectious disease as possible, however workers will need to understand that the protection provided can only be based on what protective measures are available during a time of shortage. Myhomecare.ie workers will continue to be required to use standard precautions at all times, though the use of personal protective equipment may need to be reduced if supplies for instance, aprons or gloves are in short supply.

Myhomecare.ie will work with local partners such as the Director of Public Health and national partners such as the Department of Health and the HSE in order to minimise the risks of transmission of infection as much as is practically possible.

If staff become infected with the infectious disease they would be expected to contact their line manager. They must not come in to work until they have been advised that they are able to.

### **Record Keeping**

All records must be kept in accordance with national requirements such as the Data Protection Act and with myhomecare.ie information governance and record management policies.

### **Training**

Myhomecare.ie will enable staff to participate in training in infection prevention and control and where appropriate this will be included in local induction programmes. The training will be proportionate and relevant to the roles and responsibilities of each staff member.

Staff must attend training to ensure that they are competent and have reached an agreed standard of proficiency in the management of infection prevention and control. The delivery of training is the responsibility of the Operational teams. It is the responsibility of the central training team to organise and publicise educational sessions and keep records of attendance.

Processes for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy include:

- Monitoring of needle stick injuries
- Monitoring of staff uptake of Hepatitis B vaccination and ongoing protection
- Monitoring of uptake of training
- Evidence of learning across the organisation
- Incident reporting procedure