

<b>Best Practice Guideline</b>	<b>Food Service Tray Distribution in Healthcare Facilities</b>
<b>Date</b>	April 26, 2017
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## Purpose

To provide guidance on infection prevention and control practices for delivery and pick up of food trays at VCH facilities.

## Background

- Dietary aides deliver food trays to common dining areas and to individual patient rooms in VCH health care facilities.
- Food tray delivery and pick up generally involves no contact with the patient or touching of their immediate surroundings.
- Hand hygiene practice in accordance with the Public Health Agency of Canada’s “4 moments for hand hygiene” is indicated for all VCH employees and contracted service providers as per the VCH Hand Hygiene policy.
- Inappropriate glove use can be a barrier to good hand hygiene practice and increase the risk of environmental cross contamination.

## Procedure

### 1. Hand Hygiene

- Alcohol-based hand rub is the preferred method for hand hygiene in health care settings. Soap and water is required if hands are visibly soiled and for Contact Plus Precautions.
- Staff responsible for delivery and pick up of food trays must perform hand hygiene:
  - When entering and leaving a clinical area (unit, department, neighborhood).
  - Anytime hands come into direct contact with a patient or their immediate surroundings (e.g., door handles, bed rail, privacy curtain, light switch).
  - Before and after using gloves.
  - After removing a tray from a room with a Contact Precautions or Contact Plus Precautions sign on the door.
  - Any time hands become visibly soiled.
  - On a regular basis when delivering and picking up trays as a matter of good hygiene.



- When tray delivery and pick up is complete.

## 2. Gloves

- Gloves should not be worn when delivering food trays.
- Gloves are not required when picking up food trays.
- If gloves are worn for tray pick up, they must be removed to perform hand hygiene as indicated above. Gloves do not replace hand hygiene.

## 3. Additional Precautions

- Dietary aides are *not* to deliver food trays to rooms on Droplet or Airborne Precautions.
  - Trays are to be left at the nursing station or designated location and delivered by clinical staff in a timely manner.
  - Clinical staff must remove finished trays from these rooms and leave in a designated location for pick up by dietary staff. Finished trays must not block access to soiled linen hampers or come into contact with clean or sterile supplies.
  - Timely removal of finished trays is necessary to prevent bacterial growth and spread of infection.
- Dietary aides will deliver and pick up food trays to rooms on Contact and Contact Plus Precautions:
  - Hand hygiene must be performed on exit from every isolation room. For tray pick up, hand hygiene is performed as soon as the tray is deposited on the tray cart.
  - Gloves are not required. If gloves are worn, they must be removed immediately after leaving the isolation room.
  - Gowns are not required.
- If a patient on Droplet Precautions is in a shared room with a patient who is not isolated, then the dietary aide may deliver to the room but not to the bed on Droplet.
  - Example: bed 1 is not isolated and bed 2 is on Droplet, the dietary aide may deliver to bed 1 but not to bed 2.
- Disposable dishes are not required. Regular food trays, dishes and utensils can be used for all patients on additional precautions. Food trays and dishware are effectively decontaminated in commercial dish washers with hot water and detergents.

## References

1. BC Ministry of Health. (2012). [Best Practices for Hand Hygiene.](#)
2. PIDAC. (2012). [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in all Health Care settings, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.](#)
3. Public Health Agency of Canada. (2013). [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings.](#)
4. [VCH Hand Hygiene Policy.](#)

