

<b>Best Practice Guideline</b>	<b>Decorations, Costumes, Food, Celebrations, &amp; Donations</b>
<b>Date</b>	September 26, 2017
<b>Reviewed Date</b>	
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A printed version of this guideline may not be the most recent version. The OFFICIAL version is located at [www.ipac.vch.ca](http://www.ipac.vch.ca).

## Purpose

To provide guidance on infection prevention and control implications for decorations, costumes, food, celebrations and donations in VCH healthcare facilities.

## Background

Decorations, costumes, food, celebrations and donations present challenges for infection prevention and control in the healthcare setting given the presence of vulnerable individuals, outbreak management experience and the effects of staffing limitations in healthcare.

## Procedure

### 1. Decorations

#### Selection

- Choose laminated/plastic/wipeable decorations whenever possible.
- Confirm with Facilities Maintenance and Operations (FMO) that lighted displays do not pose a fire or safety risk.
- Discard decorations that are damaged or visibly soiled.
- Low to no-touch decorations (i.e., wall decorations, wreaths, Christmas trees) are the preferred seasonal and holiday decorations.
- Donated decorations may only be accepted if they meet guidelines and the site/unit is able to accommodate them.

#### Storage & Handling

- Decorations are to be handled only by healthcare providers or others (e.g., volunteers) under healthcare provider supervision.



- Decorations should be stored in a lidded plastic container to minimize dust accumulation (e.g., artificial Christmas trees).
- When moving from storage, ensure that the outside of the cleanable container is cleaned and disinfected **before** moving it into a patient care area.
- **Do Not** move décor contaminated with dust or those that cannot be cleaned and disinfected into patient care areas.
- Decorations should be wiped with a cleaner/disinfectant that has a drug identification number (DIN) and comes from the Health Canada list of approved disinfectants to aid in dust removal prior to storage and again when displayed.
- Perform hand hygiene before and after handling decorations.

## Display

- Decorations are best in locations out of public reach or under continuous view of staff to monitor for any handling concerns. If there are handling concerns, move decorations out of public reach or remove.
- Decorations should not interfere with regular clinical or housekeeping duties and are not to obstruct clinical signs, access to personal protective equipment or hand hygiene locations.
- Holiday decorations should not be placed in the following areas:
  - High touch or regularly cleaned surfaces (such as hand rails).
  - Work station on wheels or other mobile electronic devices.
  - Clean and dirty service rooms
  - Medication rooms
  - Inpatient rooms\*, treatment/procedure rooms
  - OR theaters
  - Sterile reprocessing areas or any area used for sterile supply storage
- Holiday decorations should be placed using adhesives that are easy to remove so not to leave behind difficult to clean residue or damage walls (e.g., Super Command Strips, Velcro buttons, and poster putty). Avoid using tape. If tape is used, confirm all residue is removed when decorations are taken down.

**\*Note:** Patients/families may choose to decorate their own room (e.g., cards). Advise them to minimize clutter to allow for adequate environmental cleaning and to not place decorations on window sills or table tops. Should they post decorations on the wall, request easy to clean adhesive as indicated above.

## 2. Costumes



- Costumes may be worn, if appropriate to the care setting and patients/resident/clients.
- Costumes must not interfere with hand hygiene or the use of personal protective equipment.
- Headgear, wigs, hair or other costume elements must not have contact with patients when performing tasks including bending, transferring and assisting with meals.
- Costumes and footwear must be clean.

### 3. Food for Staff

Sharing food is considered high risk. Consuming food in patient care areas increases the risk to healthcare workers. If you have questions specific to your event please contact [IPAC](#).

Therefore:

- Staff should not share food or beverages
- Staff will consume food only in non-clinical areas (i.e., breakroom)

#### Food for Personal Consumption

- Staff may bring food from home or other external sources (e.g., restaurant take-out) for personal consumption.
- Staff may have external food delivered (e.g., personal size pizza, burger meal, entrée) for personal consumption. These should be individually portioned; there is to be no sharing of external food.
- Leftover food should be labeled, stored and disposed of appropriately.

#### Food Donations

Staff must not accept donated food for personal consumption and/or distribution to other staff unless all of the following criteria are met:

- It must be individually wrapped or packaged using disposable packaging. If there is evidence of tampering (i.e., open or damaged wrapping or packaging), do not consume.
- It must be commercially prepared and delivered from licensed/commercial/trusted source.
- No distribution and consumption on patient care units or other clinical areas. Consumed only in non-clinical areas.
- Must be distributed by one person who is performing consistent and diligent hand hygiene.
- Must follow expiry dates and safe food storage/refrigeration guidelines.



- Staff must perform hand hygiene before and after eating.
- When not eating or drinking, mask donning should be in accordance with the current policy.

## 4. Celebrations

All British Columbia Provincial Health Officer [Orders and Notices](#) regarding gatherings and celebrations must be followed within VCH healthcare facilities.

### Workplace or staff celebrations

- Food or beverages may not be shared at on site group celebrations
- Staff may bring their own food to group celebrations or individually packaged items may be offered. Perform hand hygiene prior to accessing pre-wrapped and packaged food or have one person who is performing consistent and diligent hand hygiene distribute individually packaged food.

### Patient, family and visitor celebrations and donations

- Follow [Food Safety](#) guidelines for bringing food for patients. General food donations are not accepted for non-specific patients.
- In situations where nutrition services are unable to meet the patient's requests, site and unit management should continue to support family bringing in external food for patients.
- Food should be stored in appropriate packaging, dated and labeled with the patient/client/resident name.
- Deliveries are to be for an individual patient and labelled with the patients name.

## 5. Donations and gifts

Donations plants and decorations are to be handled following the unit, site or areas existing policies and the overarching guidelines about handling items delivered.

### Toys, therapy and play items

- Toys, therapy and play items may be donated if they are new and can be safely cleaned and disinfected.
- Fragile items like glass and porcelain, are not accepted on pediatric units,
- Stuffed soft toys may be donated for an individual; these will not be accepted for unit use as they cannot be safely cleaned.
- Liquids such as bubble mix or paints must be sealed and not leak during delivery.



- Unless a unit has existing compatible gaming systems, donations of game cartridges or discs is not recommended.
- Handmade or homemade items must be new and must be cleanable to be accepted.

