













Routine Practices

Routine Practices help prevent the spread of infections. Use Routine Practices for every patient¹ every time, in all settings regardless of their diagnosis or infectious status. All patients require clean gown/clothes, access to or assistance with oral care and bathing daily.

	<h3>Point of Care Risk Assessment</h3> <p>Before providing care to any patient, assess the risk of spreading infection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Consider possible contact you may have with blood or body fluids (i.e. coughing, bleeding, runny nose, or soiled clothing, equipment or environment); ➤ Put on appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) before providing care. 																								
 	<h3>Hand Hygiene is the single most important step in preventing infections.</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Perform hand hygiene by using alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water as follows: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Indication</th> <th>Use ABHR</th> <th>Use Plain Soap and Water</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>When hands are visibly soiled</td> <td>No</td> <td>Yes*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Before and after direct contact with a patient</td> <td>Yes*</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Before clean procedures</td> <td>Yes*</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Before aseptic procedures</td> <td>Yes*</td> <td>Use Antimicrobial soap</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Before and after touching objects/equipment in the immediate area around the patient</td> <td>Yes*</td> <td>Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>After patient care or contact with used equipment in the patient's immediate environment when the patient has diarrhea and/or vomiting</td> <td>Yes</td> <td>Yes*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prior to food handling</td> <td>No</td> <td>Yes*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* = indicates preferred product choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep fingernails natural, clean, healthy and short; no jewelry worn below the elbows. Check the VCH Hand Hygiene Policy for more information. ➤ Use only VCH approved ABHR, soap, and hand lotion. ➤ Follow steps for performing hand hygiene found in the VCH Hand Hygiene Procedure. ➤ Perform hand hygiene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before contact with a patient or patient 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 environment; ➤ Educate patients and visitors on how and when to use hand hygiene products. 	Indication	Use ABHR	Use Plain Soap and Water	When hands are visibly soiled	No	Yes*	Before and after direct contact with a patient	Yes*	Yes	Before clean procedures	Yes*	Yes	Before aseptic procedures	Yes*	Use Antimicrobial soap	Before and after touching objects/equipment in the immediate area around the patient	Yes*	Yes	After patient care or contact with used equipment in the patient's immediate environment when the patient has diarrhea and/or vomiting	Yes	Yes*	Prior to food handling	No	Yes*
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	<h3>Respiratory Hygiene (Etiquette): Cover Your Cough, Clean Your Hands</h3> <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. 																								

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

	<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 (i.e. wound drainage) ➤ Perform hand hygiene before accessing and putting on and immediately after taking off a gown. ➤ Fasten tie strings at the neck and the waist. ➤ Make sure the sleeves cover your wrists. ➤ Do not use gowns as a housecoat or warm-up jacket. ➤ Do not wear gowns outside of the patient room/bed space 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 linen hamper (reusable) or waste container (disposable) ○ Perform hand hygiene <p>Refer to: VCH How to use Personal Protective Equipment poster for details on careful removal and disposal of gowns.</p>
	<h3>Personal Protective Equipment: Mask and Eye Protection</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ If you need a mask, you also need eye protection (i.e. goggles, face shield, mask with visor). ➤ Wear a mask and eye protection to protect your mouth/nose/eyes if splashes are likely. ➤ Perform hand hygiene before accessing and putting on and immediately before and after taking off mask and eye protection. ➤ Proper wearing of mask includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensuring a snug fit over the nose and under the chin; ○ Molding the metal bar over the nose; ○ Wearing the mask with moisture-absorbing side closest to the face (i.e. blue side out); ○ Change the mask when it is moist; ○ Careful removal after use, touching only the elastic ear loops or ties; ○ Not wearing masks around the neck. ➤ Prescription glasses are not a substitute for face protection ➤ Clean and disinfect reusable eye protection after each use. ➤ Discard single use masks and eye protection in waste containers. <p>Refer to: VCH How to use Personal Protective Equipment poster for details on careful removal and disposal of masks and eye protection.</p>
	<h3>Personal Protective Equipment: Gloves</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wear non-sterile gloves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To protect your hands from contact with blood, body fluids, excretions, secretions, mucous membranes or non-intact skin of patients ○ When handling dirty or potentially contaminated items ○ To protect non-intact skin (i.e. open cuts, lesions, rashes) ➤ Perform hand hygiene before accessing, putting on, and immediately after taking gloves off. ➤ Gloves are single use and, task and patient specific. Use only once, then dispose of them immediately after use. ➤ Change gloves between care activities for the same patient (i.e. work from clean to dirty sites; change gloves after working on a contaminated 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/the environment. ➤ Remove damaged gloves and perform hand hygiene. ➤ Never wash gloves or use ABHR while wearing gloves. ➤ Sterile gloves are for sterile procedures. <p>Refer to: VCH How to use Personal Protective Equipment poster for details on careful removal and disposal of gloves.</p>

	<h3>Handling Patient Care Items and Equipment</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discard items labeled as single patient use after use on one patient. ➤ Clean and disinfect reusable equipment after use, when visibly soiled and before use on another patient. ➤ Bring minimal supplies into patient rooms, tub rooms, and treatment rooms. ➤ Do not share personal items (i.e. soaps, lotions, razors) between patients. ➤ Use gloves when handling soiled items, equipment, and linen (appropriate PPE may also include a gown). ➤ Handle soiled/used linen with minimal agitation and place directly in linen bag without sorting. Do not overfill bags. Double bag only if leaking. ➤ After patients are discharged, discard single-use supplies that remain and launder unused linens. ➤ Meal trays and beverage dishes do not require special handling.
	<h3>Environmental Cleaning</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clean and disinfect patient care areas on a regularly scheduled basis and after patient discharge. ➤ Assign cleaning of all non-patient areas to responsible staff. ➤ Use VCH approved cleaning products and procedures. Refer to the Master Equipment Cleaning List for details on cleaning and disinfection of patient care equipment, or follow the manufacturer's recommendations for equipment not listed.
	<h3>Patient Ambulation Outside Room, Bed Space or Transfer</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Before conscious patients leave their room, educate or assist them to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perform hand hygiene ○ Put on clean clothing or hospital gown/housecoat/cover, if clothing is soiled or patient is on additional precautions ○ Ensure dressings and incontinence products contain all drainage and body fluids ○ Practice respiratory hygiene if coughing or sneezing ➤ Transport staff should check isolation flag and/or follow signage posted prior to transporting each patient.
	<h3>Visitors</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage visitors to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perform hand hygiene ○ Practice respiratory hygiene while visiting ○ Reschedule visits when feeling unwell ○ Follow posted additional precaution signage
	<h3>Waste and Sharps Handling</h3> <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 uniform/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 (fill only to marked line on container). ➤ Follow facility waste management sorting and disposal guidelines.