

# SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES



12/13/2016

## PREVENT INFECTIONS - CLEAN HANDS COUNT

### What is Hand Hygiene

Hand Hygiene means cleaning your hands by using either hand washing (washing hands with soap and water), antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub (i.e. alcohol-based hand sanitizer including foam or gel)

### Why Practice Hand Hygiene - Cleaning your hands reduces:

- The spread of germs to clients and others
- The risk of healthcare provider colonization or infection caused by germs acquired from the patient

### Two Methods for Hand Hygiene

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are the most effective products for reducing the number of germs on the hands of healthcare providers. Antiseptic soaps and detergents are the next most effective and non-antimicrobial soaps are the least effective.
- When hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are the preferred method for cleaning your hands in the healthcare setting.
- Soap and water are recommended for cleaning visibly dirty hands

### Wash with Soap and Water

- When hands are visibly dirty

- After known or suspected exposure to germs that may spread infection such as flu, colds or open skin sores.
- Before eating
- After using a restroom

### **Use an Alcohol-Based Hand Sanitizer**

- For everything else

### **When to Perform Hand Hygiene**

- Before eating
- Before and after having direct contact with a patient's intact skin (toileting, lifting the patient in bed)
- After contact with blood, body fluids or excretions, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or wound dressings
- After contact with inanimate objects (Bathroom toilet, sink, shower)
- If hands will be moving from a contaminated-body site to a clean-body site during patient care
- After glove removal
- After using a restroom

### **When and How to Wear Gloves**

Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene. Dirty gloves can soil hands.

- Always clean your hands after removing gloves.
- Steps for Glove Use:
  1. Choose the right size and type of gloves for the task
  2. Put on gloves before touching a patient's non-intact skin, open wounds or mucous membranes, such as the mouth, nose, and eyes.
  3. Change gloves during patient care if the hands will move from a contaminated body-site (e.g., perineal area) to a clean body-site (e.g., face)

4. Remove gloves after contact with a patient and/or the surrounding environment using proper technique to prevent hand contamination ◦Failure to remove gloves after caring for a patient may lead to the spread of germs.
5. Do not wear the same pair of gloves when cleaning and cooking.

### **Methods to Maintain Hand Skin Health**

- Lotions and creams can prevent and decrease skin dryness that happens from cleaning your hands
- Use only hand lotions approved by your healthcare facility because they won't interfere with hand sanitizing products

### **Fingernail Care and Jewelry**

- Germs can live under artificial fingernails both before and after using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and hand washing
- It is recommended that healthcare providers do not wear artificial fingernails or extensions when having direct contact with patients
- Keep natural nail tips less than ¼ inch long
- Some studies have shown that skin underneath rings contain more germs than comparable areas of skin on fingers without rings
- Further studies are needed to determine if wearing rings results in an increased spread of potentially deadly germs

## **WINTER WEATHER - BE PREPARED**

### **Stay Warm and Safe - What to Wear**

- Winter Coats
- Scarf
- Hats
- Gloves
- Non-Slip Winter Boots

## **Safe Driving**

- Watch for Black Ice and drive slow especially at night when visibility is limited
- Drive Slow and keep a distance between you and the car in front of you in bad driving conditions.
- Know your brakes – Anti-Lock (ABS) vs Standard
- Don't stop going uphill if possible
- Always look and steer where you want to go. Do not use cell phones when driving to text or make phone calls.
- Always wear your seat belt
- When using GPS always review driving directions before traveling in the event that the network is lost at the most opportune time.

## **Car Maintenance**

- Winter Safety Checks – Battery, Oil, Antifreeze, Windshield Fluid, Tire Pressure
- Tools in the Trunk – Jumper Cables, Rock Salt/Kitty Litter, Small Shovel, Flash Light, Blanket
- Make sure tires are properly inflated
- Keep at least a half tank of gas

## **PREVENT EXPOSURE IN UNSAFE CONDITIONS**

Home healthcare workers may encounter unsanitary homes, temperature extremes, homes without water that is safe to drink, or hostile pets.

EMPLOYEES SHOULD call the office when the home environment is unsafe or has deteriorated over time.

UNSANITARY CONDITIONS Hygiene may be an issue of concern for home healthcare workers in some client locations. Unsanitary homes may harbor pests such as rodents, lice, bedbugs, or mites. These unsanitary conditions can cause contamination of personal items as well as spread disease and infection. If a home is unsanitary:

- Avoid setting objects such as purses and bags on a carpeted floor or upholstered furniture.
- Use non-latex disposable gloves and hand sanitizer.

**HOME TEMPERATURE EXTREMES** Some clients' homes may be very hot or very cold. If this is the case, take the following steps:

- If you are concerned about the home being too cold and you cannot change the thermostat, ask your employer to contact the Client's Case Manager to help the client.
- Local resources may be available to help pay heating bills.
- If a home is uncomfortably warm, ask for permission from the client to open the windows and use fans. If necessary, apply cool compresses to your neck. Drink plenty of water.
- If you believe the client is at risk from the heat, ask your employer to case manager to help the client.

**LACK OF WATER** Home healthcare workers may encounter a home with no running water or water that is of poor quality. Homes may use bottled water for drinking and have access to cisterns for flushing and bathing.

- If conditions present a health hazard, ask your employer to contact social service agencies to help the client.
- Use hand sanitizer

**HOSTILE ANIMALS** In some situations, home healthcare workers may be threatened, bitten, or otherwise injured by unrestrained animals. When facing a threat from an animal:

- Wait outside until the pet is restrained.
- If you see fleas or other pests, discuss appropriate control measures with the client and contact your supervisor.
- If the client isn't receptive to pest control measures, ask your employer to the case manager to help the client and make it possible to work there.