

Recognize Infection Risks in Healthcare

Key points why risks in healthcare and why infection prevention:

- When staff/ HCP “spot the opportunities for germs to spread” in healthcare, then HCP can “step in and take actions to stop the spread of germs”
- “Higher chance of germs to spread in healthcare than in grocery store”
- In healthcare the personnel / staff have “lots of interactions with other people, and touch many different things and use many different equipments”

Hand hygiene with either alcohol-based hand sanitizer and or hand washing are the key steps for infection prevention. Healthcare personnel need to ensure the product is applied on all surfaces especially of finger tips, and needs to be done for at least 20 seconds.

As per CDC: Because infection risks will always exist in healthcare settings, you follow these Standard Precautions to protect patients, your coworkers and yourself;

Standard Precautions include:

- Hand hygiene.
- Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces throughout the healthcare setting.
- Giving injections and medications safely.
- Based on your assessment of the situation and the risk for germs to spread, choosing the right personal protective equipment (PPE) and using it the right way, at the right time, for the right task.
- Minimizing potential exposures to germs with strategies like source control.
- Cleaning and disinfecting reusable medical equipment between each patient

Follow Transmission based precautions “in addition to Standard Precautions for patients who may be infected or colonized with certain infectious agents for which additional precautions are needed to prevent infection transmission.” These include contact, droplet and airborne precautions.

In long term care, also need to follow Enhanced Barrier Precautions for certain microbes – multi drug resistant organisms such as Candida auris for certain activities

Personal Protective Equipment includes gowns, gloves, masks and eye shields. HCP needs to be careful when putting on PPE and taking off PPE to avoid contamination of self

N95 respirators need to be used for infections such as TB, chicken pox, disseminated varicella and measles

N95 users need to have Fit test- and need to perform seal checks (from CDC PFL):

<https://youtu.be/bQ8zZ31LLOW?si=-eSaXfDyZeN3jX2b>

- A **“user seal check”** makes sure you have a good seal every time you use your N95 so that all the air you’re breathing in passes through the filtering material and doesn’t leak in around the edges.
- Do a user seal check **every time you use your N95**, because it is possible to put on an N95 using the correct technique and still not have a good seal around the edges.
- Most of the time, the best way to check the seal is with a **“positive pressure” check**: gently breathe out while blocking the paths where air might escape to make sure there aren’t any leaks around your face or in the filter itself.

Cleaning versus Disinfection:

Cleaning is the process of removing dirt, germs and debris (seen) on surfaces

Disinfection kills (most) germs, and the disinfectant will work, only after cleaning

Contact time / dwell time is the time for the disinfectant to remain on the surface of object to kill germs effectively. The contact time of different disinfectants can be found on the [label of the product](#).

Vaccines also help with infection prevention and can prevent outbreaks in long-term care facilities. [Vaccinations to prevent respiratory viruses](#) (Influenza, COVID-19 and RSV) are recommended by MDHHS for people in long-term care facilities.