

## Infection Prevention and Control (IPC): Lessons learnt from 2016/17 primary care GP audits

The aim of the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) service is to promote as safe an environment as possible for staff, patients and visitors in order that the risks of contamination and cross-infection are kept to a minimum, effectively promoting consistent provision of clean, safe care.

### What do we do?

- A support and advice service and a prioritised IPC programme of audit visits, agreed with NHS England lead officers, acting on behalf its STP areas, which covers GP and dental practices across London
- Under the same SLA as above, a support and advice service for all new build and refurbishment projects.
- Support for CCGs on post-infection reviews and assist in the surveillance of micro -organisms that have the potential to spread and cause harm, including bacteraemia.
- Support for CCGs on critical reviews of serious incident reports.

### What have we achieved in 2016/17?

- We carried out 310 audits of GP practices across London.
- We supported all practices audited through advice during the audits and afterwards, to enable practices to make improvements.
- We followed up 36 GP practices that had low compliance with IPC standards to gain assurance that compliance on IPC standards were achieved.
- We supported nine new build/refurbishment projects from design stage to project completion.

### What we found

Whilst findings varied across STP/CCG areas, around 11% had significant low compliance with standards of IPC. These practices had support and advice from the IPC team and were followed up for quality assurance.

### Common themes

The most common themes identified were:

- Inappropriate hand washing facilities, including sinks and taps.
- Inappropriate walls and splash back surface finish
- Inappropriate flooring.
- Inappropriate facilities for keeping and storing cleaning equipment such as mops and buckets.
- Poor environmental cleaning.
- Inappropriate furniture such as fabric chairs for use by patient.
- Lack of evidence on staff IMMS (hep B and measles, varicella and rubella).
- Inappropriate non-sterile gloves (vinyl vs nitrile).
- Lack of IPC training.
- Inappropriate management of sharps, including poor labelling, assembly and positioning of sharps containers.
- Containers used for vaccine storage/vaccine separators not webbed.
- Inappropriate storage of vaccines (stored touching bottom floor of fridge).
- Lack of IPC policies or policies not up to date.

### Recommendations

- Ensure IPC is involved in all new build/refurbishment from the initial planning stage to avoid unnecessary issues.
- Ensure up to date facilities, including hand-washing facilities, flooring and others, are available in line with current Health Building Notes (HBN) guidelines.
- Ensure adequate facilities are identified and available for keeping cleaning equipment. They require good ventilation and ensure cleaning equipment is stored appropriately.
- Ensure staff receive IPC training on induction and annually thereafter.
- Ensure a robust management system is in place for IPC, including up to date policies.

## Updates

### What is norovirus?

Norovirus is a gastroenteritis illness, which occurs mainly between November and April. It is also known as the winter vomiting disease due to its seasonality and typical symptoms. Noroviruses are a group of viruses that can cause gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting).

### Infection Prevention and Control

- People in potential contact with infected individuals should wash their hands with soap and water at all times.
- Alcohol gel is ineffective against norovirus.
- Transmission is from person -to-person by the faecal-oral route; risk of infection from projectile vomit.
- The environment, particularly toilets, and food and drinks can become contaminated with norovirus through contact with an infected person.
- There is no specific treatment for norovirus; the illness should be allowed to run its course. People who are unwell should take plenty of drinks to replace lost fluids.
- If you become unwell at work, inform your manager straight away. Do not delay.

### It's all in your hands!

**Protecting vulnerable patients begins with you and hand hygiene**

### What's new?

The NHS in England is using the latest technology to track winter outbreaks of norovirus to manage services and try to cope with surges in demand for services this winter

A sickness surveillance system based on data gathered by Public Health England (PHE) is being used to track outbreaks of norovirus and other illnesses nationally. PHE has gradually increased the scope and content of the system and now carries out a comprehensive daily data collection across GP practices, NHS 111, out of hours GPs and A&Es.

They look at the trends across all data sources and try to anticipate surges in demand. The findings will allow the NHS to anticipate rises in hospital admissions and produce a planned response, such as rescheduling planned surgery and freeing up beds for those most in need.

### Hand hygiene facts

- This is the single most important (and the cheapest) method of preventing and controlling infections.
- Prevents the spread of healthcare associated infections and it is a core element of patient safety.
- Reduces the number of hospital admissions and financial costs to the NHS.
- Reduces outbreaks and antimicrobial resistance.

### Why is hand hygiene important in healthcare?

- People receiving health care may be more vulnerable to infection from germs carried on their hands or other people's.
- Germs that naturally live on the skin and normally cause few problems may be more serious when brought into a healthcare environment.

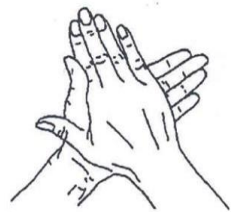
## Hand gels

Alcohol-based hand gels are an alternative to hand washing on visibly clean hands or as a supplement to hand washing to achieve a higher level of disinfection.

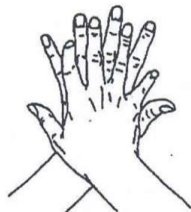
**Alcohol hand gels do not replace the need for hand washing when hands are visibly dirty.**

**Ensure your rubbing is effective: follow the six step-by-step technique**

*How to wash hands correctly*



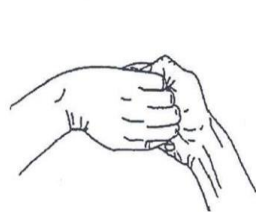
Wet hands and add solution.  
Rub palms together.



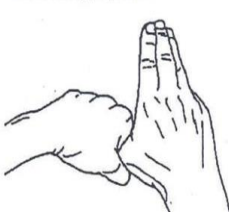
Right palm over back of left  
hand and left palm over  
back of right palm.



Palm to palm with fingers  
interlaced.



Rub backs of fingers with  
palms.



Wash each thumb by clapping  
and rotating in the palm of  
the opposite hand.



Rub each wrist with opposite  
hand. Rinse hands and dry.

## Primary care occupational health arrangements

From 1 December 2017, London moved to the new National Standard Service Specification for Occupational Health Services for primary care.

**Schedule 1 Services: These services are paid for by commissioners**

- Virology testing, vaccinations for blood borne viruses and immunisation – **National Performers List (NPL) doctors and dentists only**
- Urgent and longer term advice on exposure to potential blood borne viruses – **All staff in primary care settings**
- Specialist tier for management of those performers that have blood borne viruses – **All staff in primary care settings**
- Specialist tier for management of those performers that have blood borne viruses – **All staff in primary care settings**

**Schedule 2 Services – Paid for by the applicant, as at present**

- Occupational health screening and clearance, virology, vaccination and immunisation services - **NPL applicants**

**Schedule 3 Services – Paid for by the primary care contractor**

- Occupational health services - **Independent contractors as their employment responsibility to their staff**
- Occupational health screening and assessment, virology testing and immunisations - **Nursing and admin staff**

Please note - you should enter into your own arrangements with the providers for paying for these services

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### [NICE IPC guidelines 2017](#)

This guideline covers preventing and controlling healthcare-associated infections in children, young people and adults in primary and community care settings. It provides a blueprint for IPC precautions for everyone involved in delivering NHS care and treatment.

### [The code of practice](#)

This 2015 revision of the code of practice replaces the edition published in 2010 and applies to NHS bodies and providers of independent healthcare and adult social care in England, including primary medical and dental care providers and independent sector ambulance providers.

### [Public Health England](#)

Public Health England protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. Advice and guidance on communicable infections can be found on this site.

### [Department of Health Publications](#)

This site provides links to all Department of Health publications and guidance relating to clean, safe care, minimisation of healthcare associated infections and decontamination issues.

### [CQC Regulation 12: Safe care and treatment](#)

Guidance from CQC on Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014: Regulation 12

### [Antimicrobial stewardship: prescribing antibiotics \(NICE 2017\)](#)

This document summarises the evidence base on antimicrobial stewardship: prescribing antibiotics (previously titled: antibiotic prescribing – especially broad-spectrum antibiotics). The 2017 update includes points from the previous key therapeutic topic 3-day courses of antibiotics for uncomplicated urinary tract infection. It is a key therapeutic topic, which has been identified to support medicines optimisation.

### [Guidance on BBV and sharps injuries \(HSE\)](#)

This website provides information and guidance for occupational settings on the three most recognised blood-borne viruses in the UK: hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV. The Safer Needles Network is aimed at those concerned with reducing needle stick injuries and blood-borne viruses.

### [Staff Immunisation](#)

Evidence for clinical staff on immunity of hepatitis B, measles, varicella and Rubella as well as health clearance for tuberculosis, hepatitis C and HIV: New healthcare workers. The Green Book: Chapter 12.

## Points to remember - areas for safe working include:

**Maintain good hand hygiene**

**Ensure sharps safety**

**Good waste segregation and disposal**

**Appropriate choice and use of personal protective equipment (PPE)**

**Adequate cleaning, disinfection and sterilisation procedures**

**Maintain a good and safe environment**

**Ensure staff are well protected by adequate Immunisation**

**Good maintenance of vaccines and cold chain**

**Early recognition and management of outbreak of infectious conditions**

**Appropriate isolation procedures**

## Infection Prevention and Control is EVERYONE's business!

Infection Prevention and Control concerns everyone in the NHS whether in clinical or non-clinical roles. It sets out to ensure everything possible should be done to prevent infection from developing and spreading to others.

**Ensure you provide clean, safe care 100% of the time**

## CONTACT US

The IPC team can be contacted by email [nelcsu.ipcteam@nhs.net](mailto:nelcsu.ipcteam@nhs.net)

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