

Deafblind Scotland vision – “A society in which deafblind people have the permanent support and recognition necessary to be equal citizens”



Deafblind Scotland Infection Control Policy

What do we mean by Infection control?

Deafblind Scotland fully recognises and accepts its responsibility to promote and maintain a safe working environment and to protect the health, safety and welfare of Clients and staff. The control of **infectious communicable diseases** is an important aspect of this overriding duty, and although DbS does not provide nursing care some risks remain, and need to be managed in a safe and organised manner. Advice will be sought from time to time from appropriately trained professionals working in Infection Control and the Agency follows the general guidance provided by the Code of Practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infections published by the Department of Health.

Infection prevention and control measures aim to ensure the protection of those who might be vulnerable to acquiring an infection both in the general community and while receiving care due to health problems, in a range of settings. The basic principle of infection prevention and control is hygiene.

A Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) is an infection that may affect people when they are receiving healthcare. People mainly catch these infections in hospitals, but they can also get them in care homes, doctors' surgeries, health centres and even at home if they are being cared for there. In this policy you will find general information on Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) such as MRSA and Clostridium difficile (C diff), as well as information and advice about Hand Hygiene. Infection prevention and control is about improving and protecting the health of everyone, through the prevention, identification, and management of HAI.

<http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/haiic/>

The above web link provides support and advice to staff and others on how to prevent the spread of infection through good infection control practice.

Staff can help to control and prevent the spread of infection by following these simple rules:

- Try not to visit relatives or friends in hospital if you or someone you live with is unwell.
- Wash and dry your hands before you visit a hospital, particularly after going to the toilet. NHS sites provides alcohol hand gels at the entrance to all wards for use by staff, patients and visitors.
- Always ask staff for advice before you bring food or drink into hospital for a patient.

- Don't sit on patients' beds and don't bring too many visitors at once. Never touch dressings, drips or other equipment around the bed.
- If you think NHS premises are not as clean as they should be, let the nurse in charge on the ward know. If you think a healthcare worker has forgotten to wash their hands, remind them about this.
- Have a good routine of personal hygiene and cleanliness at home, especially when someone in the household is sick or has been in hospital.
- Only take antibiotics if they have been prescribed to you by a doctor, and complete the full course of treatment.

Hand Hygiene

The most common way germs are spread is by people's hands. Germs are often harmless but they can cause illnesses such as colds and tummy bugs, as well as more serious illnesses such as E.Coli and flu. Hand contact is also the most common way for infections such as MRSA and C diff to spread.

Hand washing is the single most important thing you can do to help to reduce the spread of infections. Washing your hands properly with soap and warm water can help protect you, your family, children and others.

You should make regular and thorough hand washing part of your and your family's daily routine, especially:

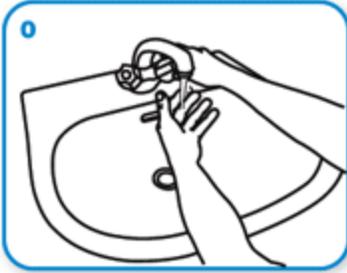
- Before eating or handling food
- After using the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After touching animals or animal waste
- After handling rubbish
- After changing a nappy
- After handling animals
- Before and after touching a sick or injured person
- Before and after visiting a hospital ward (remember alcohol-based hand rubs are also provided)

Clean hands protect against infection

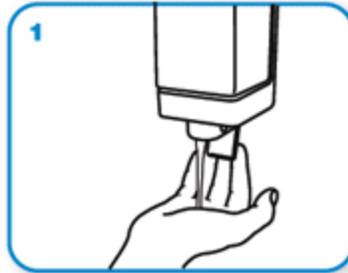
- Clean your hands regularly.
- Wash your hands with soap and water, and dry them thoroughly.
- Use alcohol-based handrub if you don't have immediate access to soap and water.

How do I wash my hands properly?

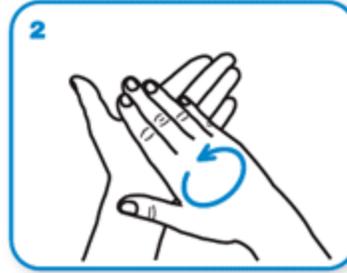
Washing your hands properly takes about as long as singing "Happy Birthday" twice, using the images below.



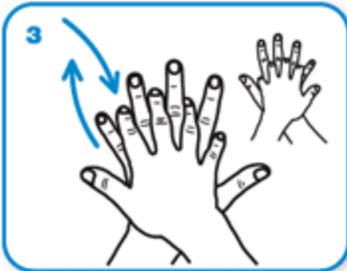
Wet hands with water



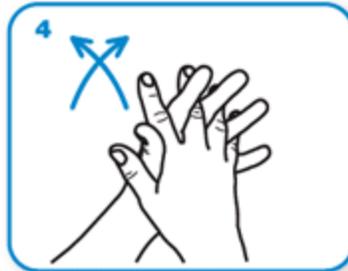
apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces.



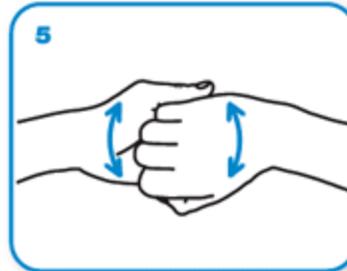
Rub hands palm to palm



right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa



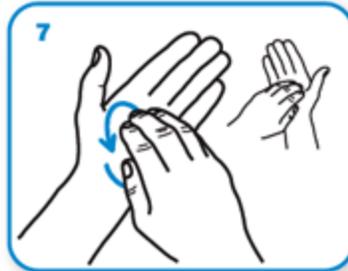
palm to palm with fingers interlaced



backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked



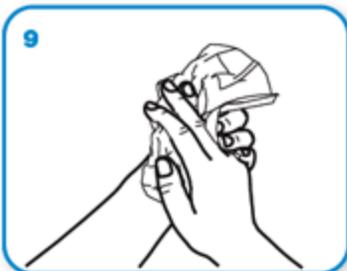
rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa



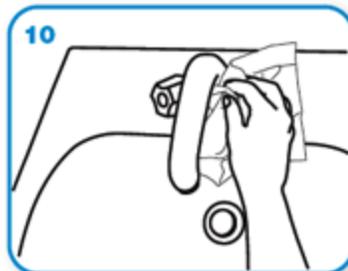
rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa.



Rinse hands with water



dry thoroughly with a single use towel



use towel to turn off faucet



...and your hands are safe.

Clostridium difficile (CDI)

Clostridium difficile (C diff) is a germ that lives naturally in the bowel of around 3% of adults and normally causes no problems in healthy people. C diff can cause infections when the use of antibiotics upsets the balance of good and bad bacteria in the gut, allowing C diff bacteria to multiply and cause symptoms such as diarrhoea and fever.

As C diff infections are usually caused by antibiotics, most cases happen in a healthcare environment such as a hospital. Elderly people and people who have certain medical procedures to the bowel are most likely to get C diff infections.

The symptoms of C diff infection include mild to severe diarrhoea, fever and stomach pains. In many cases the infection is mild and will only last a few days but in some cases the symptoms may be more serious and last several weeks.

C diff infections are extremely contagious and are spread very easily so it is extremely important that staff, patients and visitors regularly wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water.

If a patient in hospital tests positive for C diff they may be isolated in a side room or given their own toilet or commode to prevent the infection spreading. Doctors may decide to stop their antibiotics or change them to another type.

Procedure

Infection Control

- a) **Safe Working Practices** which are geared to ensuring that no employee arrives at the service user carrying any unknown Infectious Disease, or if a disease is present, that safe working practices are designed, implemented and monitored so as to minimise the risk of the disease spreading;
- b) The general principle that all employees and service users are **encouraged to report** any instance of fever, feeling unwell etc, so that a proper medical diagnosis can be made as quickly as possible, and where necessary, appropriate containment measures are put in place without delay;
- c) The principle is that any employee who becomes infected with an Infectious Disease, such as Swine Flu, for example, is **isolated** from other staff for as long as is necessary and does not take part in care activities during this time;
- d) Any Service User confirmed as having an Infectious Disease to a degree that containment and isolation is required, service provision will be reviewed for the protection of both the Service User and members of Staff. Advice will be sought from appropriately trained professionals working in Infection Control.

- e) The implementation of **appropriate standard and universal precautions**, such as effective and regular handwashing, use of personal protective equipment etc. so as to minimise the possibility of infections being spread;
- f) The **education and training** of service users, staff etc on Infection Control and prevention measures so as to create a safe environment for everyone.

Immunisation

Staff are advised to seek medical advice on the appropriate level of immunisation for their role. Recommendations may be made in terms of updates to immunisations such as:

- Annual flu vaccination;
- Specific flu vaccination, such as swine flu;
- Hepatitis B vaccination for those care workers who may come into contact with blood or body fluids;
- BCG for those care workers who may be exposed to Clients with tuberculosis;
- Varicella vaccine, which is recommended for care workers who do not know whether they have a previous history of chicken pox or herpes zoster.

Personal Protective Equipment - PPE

- Gloves
- Aprons

Why use these?

Gloves

- To reduce the number of micro-organisms getting on the skin of the carer during certain situations where there may be high numbers present, e.g. incontinence, wound discharge, blood spills
- To reduce the chance of micro-organisms getting onto other patients or surfaces from the carer's hands
- To protect the carer's hands from chemicals, medications and cleaning fluids

Aprons

For use when your clothing is likely to have contact with body fluids and discharges.

- To protect clothing from becoming soiled with body fluids
- To reduce the number of micro-organisms getting on to clothing, particularly from the waist to knees area, when giving care

- To reduce chance of transfer of micro-organisms to other people and to staff hands from contact with clothing
- dealing with incontinence
- giving personal care
- cleaning equipment
- cleaning up spills

What gloves to use

Thin polythene disposable gloves - for food preparation and food handling, Never to be used for personal care, split easily and leak, slip off hands easily.

Single use non sterile vinyl gloves - When person is latex sensitive, contact with spilt body fluids likely (not as protective as latex with blood contact), changing pads, wiping bottoms, etc. dressing dirty wounds, leg ulcers, etc. when carer's skin is damaged

Single use powder free latex gloves - When dexterity is important, manipulation or lengthy procedure likely, contact with blood is likely.

Nitrile gloves - use as for latex gloves when person is latex sensitive, better than vinyl when manipulation or dexterity important more protective than vinyl for blood contact

Eye/face protection

When carrying out procedures where spray or aerosols may be created

The storage of PPE should be in a place that is easy for people to collect it and put it on. If a service user is isolated and relatives and friends are required to use PPE to prevent the spread of infection then PPE should be supplied in an obvious way to tell people they are required to use it, such as outside the person's room.

• Plastic gloves and aprons can present a significant choking and/or suffocation risk to certain vulnerable groups. They can also be placed in drainage pipes and toilets and cause damage or flooding problems. Is the personal protective equipment stored in a place where members of these vulnerable groups are unable to access it without supervision?

Applying, removing and disposing of PPE

PPE will only protect you and others if you know how to put it on and take it off correctly and dispose of it safely. The following gives you some general guidance, but specific PPE items vary.

Disposable gloves

Putting on

- select correct glove size and type.
- perform hand hygiene.
- pull to cover wrists.

Taking off

- grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand and peel off.
- hold the removed glove in the gloved hand.
- slot your finger under the lip of the remaining glove and peel it off, taking care not to touch the contaminated outer surface.
- dispose of the gloves in the waste bin.
- perform hand hygiene.

Disposable aprons

Aprons must always be changed after you finish care activities.

Putting on

Pull the apron over your head and fasten at the back of your waist.

Taking off

- unfasten (or break) the ties.
- pull the apron away from your neck and shoulders, lifting it over your head and taking care to touch the inside only, not the contaminated outer side.
- fold or roll the apron into a bundle with the inner side outermost.
- dispose of the apron in the waste bin.
- perform hand hygiene.

For further guidance visit the training resource below for the disposal of specific clinical and other waste streams.

<http://rcnhca.org.uk/health-safety-and-security/infection-prevention-and-control/personal-protective-equipment/>

