

## MINIMIZE THE SPREAD OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

*Replaces policy and procedures for minimizing the risk of spreading infectious diseases*

### Policy Statement

UCP Central PA will take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of employees and participants during global and local infectious disease events. These may include implementing infection control guidelines designed to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a uniform, consistent process for adhering to a strict standard and contact precautions to minimize the risk of spreading infectious disease, and as a protection for all employees and participants.

### Procedures

Standard Precautions are used for all participant care. They're based on a risk assessment and make use of common sense practices and personal protective equipment use that protect healthcare providers from infection and prevent the spread of infection from participant to participant. This includes:

1. Hand Hygiene
2. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever there is an expectation of possible
3. Follow respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette principles
4. Properly handle and properly clean and disinfect the environment
5. Handle textiles and laundry carefully

#### 1. Hand Hygiene

Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself from getting sick. Learn when and how you should wash your hands to stay healthy.

#### Wash Your Hands Often to Stay Healthy

You can help yourself and your loved ones stay healthy by washing your hands often, especially during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet

- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child or adult who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage

### Follow Five Steps to Wash Your Hands the Right Way

Washing your hands is easy, and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals.

Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### Use Hand Sanitizer When You Can't Use Soap and Water

You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

**Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to get rid of germs in most situations.** If soap and water are not readily available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. You can tell if the sanitizer contains at least 60% alcohol by looking at the product label.

**Sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in many situations. However,**

- Sanitizers do **not** get rid of all types of germs.
- Hand sanitizers may not be as effective when hands are visibly dirty or greasy.
- Hand sanitizers might not remove harmful chemicals from hands like pesticides and heavy metals.

#### How to use hand sanitizer

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.

**Caution!** Swallowing alcohol-based hand sanitizers can cause alcohol poisoning if more than a couple of mouthfuls are swallowed. Keep it out of reach of young children and adults who do not have an awareness of poisons and supervise their use.

## Skin and Nail Care

### *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 handwashing
- It is recommended that healthcare providers do not wear artificial fingernails or extensions when having direct contact with participants at high risk (e.g., those in intensive-care units or operating rooms)
- Keep natural nail tips less than ¼ inch long
- Some studies have shown that skin underneath rings contains 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

## 2. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) whenever there is an expectation of possible

### Glove Use

#### When and How to Wear Gloves

- Wear gloves, according to Standard Precautions, when it can be reasonably anticipated that contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, potentially contaminated skin or contaminated equipment could occur.
- Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene.
  - If your task requires gloves, perform hand hygiene prior to donning gloves, before touching the participant or the participant's environment.
  - Perform hand hygiene immediately after removing gloves.
- Change gloves and perform hand hygiene during participant care, if
  - gloves become damaged,
  - gloves become visibly soiled with blood or body fluids following a task,
  - moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same participant or if another clinical indication for hand hygiene occurs.

- Never wear the same pair of gloves in the care of more than one participant.
- Carefully remove gloves to prevent hand contamination.

### 3. Follow respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette principles

The following measures to contain respiratory secretions are recommended for all individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing;
- Use in the nearest waste receptacle to dispose of the tissue after use;
- Perform hand hygiene (e.g., hand washing with non-antimicrobial soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.

### 4. Properly handle and properly clean and disinfect the environment

#### Surfaces

If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens are expected to be effective against harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:

If the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely. Otherwise, use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims that are suitable for porous surfaces

Computer keyboards and mice, phones, and tablets.

All these surfaces can be wiped safely with **disposable, pre-moistened disinfectant cloths, provided they aren't overly saturated with liquid**. Before wiping down electronics, give the cloth a gentle squeeze to **remove excess liquid**, then proceed. Remember, it's **liquid that is the enemy of electronics, not the disinfectant** itself.

For screens such as touch monitors, smartphones, and tablets, some cleaners may leave a haze on the glass upon drying. Follow up with a screen cleaning wipe to remove any residue.

## Cleaning Infected Areas

Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash. Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.

Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to clean hands after removing gloves.

Cleaning staff and others should clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%-95% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.

Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE (e.g., tear in gloves) or any potential exposures to their supervisor.

## 5. Handle textiles and laundry carefully

### Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

Do not shake dirty laundry; this minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

## Stop the spread of illness

**Everyday** personal preventive actions can help keep yourself and others from getting and spreading respiratory illnesses like the flu. They include:

- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- Washing hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.

During a flu pandemic there are measures you can take in addition to these everyday preventive actions. They include:

- Staying home if you have been exposed to a family or household member who is sick.
- Covering your nose and mouth with a mask or cloth if you are sick and around people or at a mass gathering in a community where the pandemic is already occurring.

## Personal preventive actions

The flu virus is believed to spread mainly from person to person through droplets that come from the nose and mouth when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or talks. The flu virus may also spread when people touch something with flu virus on it, and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth. Many other viruses that cause respiratory illnesses spread this way, too.

Getting an annual flu vaccination is the best way to prevent seasonal flu. In the event that a new flu virus emerges that can rapidly spread from person to person worldwide, causing a flu pandemic, a vaccine may not be immediately available. Personal preventive actions help lower your risk of coming in contact with flu and other similar viruses. These everyday preventive actions serve as an extra layer of protection even after people are vaccinated.

## Contact precautions

**Recommended precautions for household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a non-healthcare a patient with infectious diseases, or**

**A patient under investigation for infectious disease**

Household members, intimate partners, and caregivers in a non-healthcare setting may have close contact with a person with symptomatic, laboratory-confirmed infectious disease or a person under investigation.

Close contacts should monitor their health; they should call their healthcare provider right away if they develop symptoms suggestive of infectious disease.

Close contacts should also follow these recommendations:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow their healthcare provider's instructions for medication(s) and care. You should help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient's symptoms. If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and tell them that the patient has laboratory-confirmed infectious disease. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected.
- Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department for additional guidance. If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has, or is being evaluated for an infectious disease.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.
- Perform hand hygiene frequently. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- The patient should wear a facemask when you are around other people. If the patient is not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), you, as the caregiver, should wear a mask when you are in the same room as the patient.
- Wear a disposable facemask and gloves when you touch or have contact with the patient's blood, stool, or body fluids, such as saliva, sputum, nasal mucus, vomit, urine.
- Throw out disposable facemasks and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
- When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then, immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid sharing household items with the patient. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items. After the patient uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly (see below "Wash laundry thoroughly").
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.
- Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
- Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, stool, or body fluids on them.

- Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items and keep soiled items away from your body. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after removing your gloves.
- Read and follow directions on labels of laundry or clothing items and detergent. In general, using a normal laundry detergent according to washing machine instructions and dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.
- Place all used disposable gloves, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste. Clean your hands (with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.
- Discuss any additional questions with your state or local health department or healthcare provider.

## Safe Practices Regarding Needles

Employees should practice safety when they are exposed to needles or other sharp objects during the scope of their employment. The most likely situations where contact with needles or other sharp objects would occur would be during the administration of blood sugar checks or providing other assistance for consumers who have diabetes and assistance for consumers or staff who experience a severe allergic reaction and use an Epi-Pen for this reaction.

- Contact Precautions must be followed at all times when dealing with needles and other sharp objects.
- Used needles and other sharp objects must be properly disposed of immediately after use.
- Never place a cap back onto a used needle.
- Never dispose of a needle or other sharp object in a trash can or trash bag.
- Each UCP facility based program where use of needles and other sharp objects occurs must have an approved sharps disposal container.