

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL RECAP

How You Can Protect Yourself while caring for patients whether or not suspected / confirmed COVID-19 positive.

As we all know spread of COVID -19 is thought to occur mostly from person-to-person via large respiratory droplets when contaminated people are sneezing/ coughing/speaking/ touching the environment with their infected hands, via close contacts with infected people (less than 2 m) and when touching areas/objects which have been contaminated.

Close contact can also occur while caring for a patient with infectious secretions including sputum, respiratory droplets, serum, blood, urine and faeces, but **also tears**. For some unknown reasons sweat is not believed to be contaminated.

You should continue to strictly adhere to:

A - Standard Precautions > the most basic set of IPC recommendations to be adhered to **with all patients whatever their infectious status, at all time, in all care settings.**

- Hand hygiene (soap & water/ hand sanitiser – 7 Step technique – “5 moments of hand washing” >
 - Before and after all patient contacts + (after touching their environment in a ward)
 - Between different tasks with the same patient
 - Before and after use of PPE
 - In case of potential contact with any body fluids (sputum, serum, blood, **tears**, urine, faeces...) broken skin or mucous membranes (**moist lining** in the nose/mouth/**eyes** ...}
 - Before and after ANTT
- Respiratory and cough etiquette – “Catch it, Bin it, Wash it”
- Use of appropriate PPE
- Decontamination of the shared equipment between patients as per manufacturer instructions: slit lamps, laser machines, couches, sphygmomanometers, glucometers etc...
- Decontamination of the environment
- Placement of patient > Isolation ? 1) Normally if somebody is strongly suspected/confirmed to be infected they should either not enter the building or be sent home ASAP (e g Staff). At the very beginning we thought we would

have to isolate some patients in Adrienne's room. 2) Isolation from other patients if the patient's immune system is very low .

B - Transmission-Based Precautions (TBP)> when Standard Precautions are not sufficient extra measures are added to reduce the spread of very infectious agents.

There are 3 categories of TBP > "Contact Precautions", "Droplet Precautions" and "Airborne Precautions".

Covid-19 spreads very easily. Patients are contagious after the symptoms appear, however studies have shown some infected individuals do not show any symptoms.

Therefore anybody is potentially infected.

As Covid-19 is transmitted mainly via **Droplets** and **Contact** → "Droplet" and "Contact" Precautions are being implemented ("Airborne precautions" are only used when performing "aerosol generating procedures" (AGP) in ICU settings).

Therefore various enhanced measures have been put in place :

- Triage and Screening:
 - Number of clinics has been drastically reduced and patients are triaged before attending the clinics to determine who really needs to be given an appointment.
 - At the entrance, patients are actively screened to ensure they have no symptoms of illness and have not been in contact with infected relatives =>Some patients may not be allowed entry into the facility/ Relatives are not allowed in the premises.
 - Posters are displayed at the entrance advising not to enter the facility if unwell.
- Respiratory hygiene/Cough etiquette:
 - Posters for cough etiquette are displayed in all the waiting areas
 - Patients may be requested to wear a face mask if coughing (e g smokers/ex-smokers) to minimise chances of potential exposure.
- More frequent hand washing with soap/water or alcohol-based hand gel are required-> especially since several pieces of PPE are being used all in one go.
 - Wash hands **immediately before and after use of PPE,**
 - Use hand hygiene during the process of doffing multiple PPE >

- Enhanced use of PPE → **the UK government has issued new guidelines on 02/04/2020 for outpatient settings** (Table 2)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877599/T2_Recommended_PPE_for_primary_outpatient_and_community_care_by_setting_poster.pdf

→ Practice how to properly don, use, and doff PPE in a manner to prevent self-contamination. Dispose of used PPE in clinical waste bin.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877658/Quick_guide_to_donning_doffing_standard_PPE_health_and_social_care_poster_.pdf

When non-airborne generating procedures AGP need to be carried out the doffing of PPE is as follow (+ rationale):

- Gloves** need always to be removed first as they are the most contaminated items of your PPE (see Fig 1)

Clean hands with hand sanitiser.

2 - **Aprons** should be removed by pulling them away from the face/shoulders and rolling them downwards so the contaminated outer surface is folded inwards. Thus only the clean, inner surface is exposed →It reduces potential contamination of the skin & clothing. Be careful not to touch your surroundings while removing the apron.

Wash your hands

3 - Remove your **mask** by pulling the strings away from the side of the face. If you have not washed your hands fumbling into the hair to find the strings will potentially contaminate the hair.

Wash your hands

*** Never pull the mask or apron from the front surface as you would be grasping the most contaminated surface of the items and thus be at risk of self-contamination

Fig 1:



If PPE are not used properly, especially when removing them, if hand hygiene is not performed thoroughly when required, staff may be at risk of infecting themselves and of contaminating everything else > environment/equipment, colleagues and other patients.

PPE is only as effective as the user's skill in use and removal

- Enhanced equipment and environmental cleaning:
 - Between patients with Clinell wipes > chairs/door handles/ computer mouse and keyboard, **pen** etc...
 - twice a day with Actichlor Plus (all the flat surface, frequently touched area > chairs, door handles/light switch/keypad for changing rooms...)
 - → **Make sure to clean your hands before handling your mobile phone during clinics. Mobile phone carry a multitude of micro-organisms in the best of time.**