

Health practitioner infection control measures

When caring for all patients:

Apply routinely in all health-care settings for all patients. Standard precautions include hand hygiene; use of personal protective equipment to avoid direct contact with patients' blood, body fluids, secretions (including respiratory secretions) and non-intact skin. Standard precautions also include prevention of needle-stick or sharps injury; safe waste management; cleaning and disinfection of equipment; and cleaning of the environment.

When caring for patients with cough or other respiratory symptoms:

Droplet precautions prevent large droplet transmission of respiratory viruses. Use a medical mask if working within 1 metre of the patient. Place patients in single rooms, or group together those with the same etiological diagnosis. If an etiological diagnosis is not possible, group patients with similar clinical diagnosis and based on epidemiological risk factors, with a spatial separation of at least 1 metre. When providing care in close contact with a patient with respiratory symptoms (e.g. coughing or sneezing), use eye protection (face-mask or goggles), because sprays of secretions may occur. Limit patient movement within the institution and ensure that patients wear medical masks when outside their rooms.

When caring for patients with suspected COVID-19:

Droplet and contact precautions prevent direct or indirect transmission from contact with contaminated surfaces or equipment (i.e. contact with contaminated oxygen tubing/interfaces). Use PPE (medical mask, eye protection, gloves and gown) when entering room and remove PPE when leaving. If possible, use either disposable or dedicated equipment (e.g. stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs and thermometers). If equipment needs to be shared among patients, clean and disinfect between each patient use. Ensure that health care workers refrain from touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with potentially contaminated gloved or un-gloved hands. Avoid contaminating environmental surfaces that are not directly related to patient care (e.g. door handles and light switches). Ensure adequate room ventilation. Avoid movement of patients or transport. Perform hand hygiene.

When performing an aerosol-generating procedure in patient with COVID-19:

Ensure that healthcare workers performing aerosol-generating procedures (i.e. open suctioning of respiratory tract, high-flow nasal oxygen, non-invasive ventilation, intubation, bronchoscopy, cardiopulmonary resuscitation) use PPE, including gloves, long-sleeved gowns, eye protection, and fit-tested particulate respirators (N95 or equivalent, or higher level of protection). (The scheduled fit test should not be confused with user seal check before each use.) Whenever possible, use adequately ventilated single rooms when performing aerosol-generating procedures, meaning negative pressure rooms with minimum of 12 air changes per hour or at least 160 litres/second/patient in facilities with natural ventilation. Avoid the presence of unnecessary individuals in the room. Care for the patient in the same type of room after mechanical ventilation commences.



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