

IPC Topic: Infection Control in Wound Care

Intro: Wound care is an important task in caring for clients who may have chronic wounds or other skin conditions. Understanding and practicing IPC steps during wound care keeps your clients and yourself safe from the spread of germs and infections.

What is the risk?⁴ Recognizing where germs live in and on the body and how they can spread can help you choose the right infection control actions to protect everyone. Many germs grow on healthy skin. Germs spread through touch and by breaking down or bypassing the body's defenses. Open wounds are a great pathway for germs to enter and spread throughout the body.

Highlights:

- Hand Hygiene^{2,6}
 - **Before** initial client or client environment contact
 - **Before** taking off wound dressing and before placing clean dressing.
 - **Before** putting on gloves
 - **After** body fluid exposure risk
 - **After** client or client environment contact
 - **After** removal of gloves

 - Hand Sanitizer-**recommended when hands not visibly soiled**-should be readily accessible, near point of care wound supplies, and outside client door.

- Personal Protective Equipment^{5,7}
 - Keep gloves available in multiple sizes in client's room.
 - Wear gloves during all stages of wound care including when applying new dressings.
 - Don gloves after performing hand hygiene.
 - Doff gloves every time when going from dirty to clean surfaces or supplies.
 - Doff dirty gloves and clean your hands before caring for another client.
 - Wear a mask and eye protection if there is any chance of splattering (e.g., wounds with drainage, especially during debridement and irrigation).
 - Wear a new disposable gown to prevent contact with the client or the client's bed for each dressing change.
 - Covering wounds also called "source control," should be used to reduce risk and stop the spread of germs.

- Equipment and supplies^{3,5}
 - Reusable equipment, for example hand-held inspection mirrors, bandage scissors, etc., that touch open wounds, bodily fluids, or gloved hands, need the following:

- 1) Appropriate level of disinfection before use on another client. Please refer to your facilities policy on proper sterilization of reusable medical equipment.
 - 2) Dedicated wound care equipment for each client needs to be disinfected after wound care is complete, per manufactures instruction and appropriate storage until next dressing change per facility guidelines.
- All wound sprays need to be assigned to an individual and not stored with clean wound care supplies.
 - Dated and labeled properly.
 - Wound care dressings can be disposed of in the regular trash unless they are dripping or saturated with blood or other body fluids.
 - If saturated with blood or body fluids dispose of per facility protocol in biohazard receptacle.
 - Disinfect the surface where wound care supplies will be placed prior to setting supplies in client rooms.
 - Clean bandages should be cut with clean scissors, not with scissors used to cut off soiled bandages.
 - Ointments and creams should be dedicated to one client. If unable and dispensing bulk medications, hand hygiene and gloves should be used to dispense into medication cup to prevent bacteria from entering container.
 - Dressing supplies should be dedicated to one wound and not multiple.
 - When performing care, work from the less dirty wound to the dirtiest.
 - If ace wraps are used, a new wrap should be used with each dressing change.
- Summary:
Wound care is an important area to make sure that IPC steps are followed, such as hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection to lessen the spread of germs that can lead to infections.

For more information on recognizing risk in therapy departments and related Project Firstline materials, see References below:

- 1.) [Human Wound and Its Burden: Updated 2020 Compendium of Estimates | Advances in Wound Care \(liebertpub.com\)](#)
- 2.) <https://www.cdc.gov/handhygiene/providers/index.html>
- 3.) [ICAR Tool for General Infection and Control \(IPC\) Across Settings - Module 8. Wound Care Facilitator Guide \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- 4.) [Germs Live in and on the Body | Project Firstline | Infection Control | CDC](#)
- 5.) [Infection Control Assessment Tools | HAI | CDC](#)
- 6.) [ICAR Tool for General Infection and Control \(IPC\) Across Settings - Module 2: Hand Hygiene Faciliator Guide \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- 7.) [Module 3: Transmission Based Precautions \(TBP\) Facilitator Guide \(cdc.gov\)](#)