



Routine Practices for Community Service Providers

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What Are Routine Practices?

Routine practices are methods used regularly to protect ourselves when there is potential to come in contact with blood or body fluids from others. We cannot always tell if a person has an infection so we **must treat all blood and body fluids as potentially infectious.**

Body fluids can include feces, urine, vomitus, nasal secretions, sputum, and saliva, whether or not they contain visible blood. Extra precautions beyond routine practices may need to be used with certain fluids.

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of germs from one person to another

What Is Hand Hygiene?

Hand hygiene refers to removing or killing germs on the hands as well as maintaining good skin integrity. There are two methods of removing/killing germs on hands: washing with soap and running water for a minimum of 15 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand rub (at least 60% alcohol content).



When Is Hand Hygiene Important?

Always wash your hands thoroughly:

- Before preparing or eating foods.
- Before and after providing first aid.
- After coming in contact with someone who is sick.
- After using the washroom.
- After changing diapers.
- After handling blood or body fluids whether or not gloves are worn.
- After handling items soiled with blood or body fluids.
- After you cough or sneeze.
- After you use a tissue to wipe your nose.
- After gloves are removed.

Skin Care

Intact skin is the first line of defence; therefore careful attention to skin care is an essential part of the hand hygiene program. If integrity of skin is an issue, the individual should be referred to a physician for assessment. Hand lotion prevents drying and cracked skin. Pump-type containers are recommended. If containers are reused, the containers and the pumps should be washed and dried before refilling.

When Should A Hand Sanitizer Be Used?

When hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand rubs are the preferred method for cleaning hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs should have a minimum alcohol content of 60%.

Alcohol hand sanitizers kill the germs on hands, including transient illness-causing bacteria that are picked up from doorknobs, light switches and other surfaces that hands come into contact with.

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The effectiveness of the sanitizers depends on the amount and type of alcohol used.

Hand washing with soap and running water for 15 seconds must be done when hands are visibly dirty.

How Can I Protect Myself?

Protecting yourself involves some common sense practices:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Always treat blood and body fluids as possibly infectious.
- Wear rubber, vinyl or latex disposable gloves when handling blood, body fluids, cleaning cuts or scrapes, and when cleaning blood spills; handle blood-soiled articles from other people cautiously.
- Gowns, aprons, masks, protective eyewear and face shields should be worn when procedures may generate splashes of blood or body fluids; wash hands after removing gloves and discard the gloves in a plastic bag.
- Clean up spills promptly using a disposable absorbent cloth (i.e. paper towel) first, then disinfect the area with an appropriate product.
- Never re-cap, bend or break-off used needles.
- Place needles and syringes in a puncture-proof container with a lid.
- If you have a needle stick injury, immediately seek medical attention.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as toothbrushes, razors, towels, nail files, water bottles, and chap sticks.
- Dispose of razors carefully.

What can I do to prepare to see my clients?

Phone ahead:

- Where appropriate phone ahead to screen clients for illness. If possible defer your visit until the client is well.
- If the service can not be deferred, take appropriate precautions to protect yourself outlined above.

- If the client has a respiratory illness and you have to provide services within 2 meters (6 feet) of the client, in addition to routine practices, wear a surgical/procedure mask and protective eyewear/goggles. This is to prevent droplet secretions from your client's coughing or sneezing from infecting you by entering your eyes, nose and mouth.

How Can I Protect My Clients?

Practice good hygiene:

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Consistently practice proper respiratory etiquette such as coughing/sneezing into the inside elbow or using a disposable tissue followed by hand hygiene.
- Stay home if ill or until assessed by a physician.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's cuts or scrapes or bandages unless wearing appropriate gloves.
- Ensure clients are not sharing personal items such as toothbrushes, razors, towels, nail files, water bottles, and chap sticks.

Use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol or wash with soap and running water for at least 15 seconds when hands are visibly dirty.

