



# DE~BUGGED

*Focusing on the provision of Clean, Safe Care...*

Infection Prevention & Control Newsletter provided by Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust

## IT'S IN YOUR HANDS - PREVENT SEPSIS IN HEALTH CARE

The World Health Organisation is calling on healthcare staff to take actions to prevent health care associated sepsis through hand hygiene and infection prevention and control action. Healthcare associated infections are infections acquired during health care delivery, are common and are a risk factor for developing sepsis. However, there are some which we can prevent and effective hand hygiene plays a key role.

**World Hand Hygiene Day on the 5<sup>th</sup> May** (think 5<sup>th</sup> day, 5<sup>th</sup> month and 5 moments for hand hygiene) is an opportunity for everyone to focus on enhancing their hand hygiene practices and those of their colleagues and to further consider how we can take action to reduce infection and sepsis in health care.

The World Health Organisation suggested actions this year include:

-  **Health workers:** "Take 5 moments to clean your hands to prevent sepsis in health care."
-  **IPC leads:** "Champion promotion of hand hygiene to prevent sepsis in health care."
-  **Managers and Leaders:** "Take action to prevent sepsis in health care and ensure hand hygiene remains a quality indicator."
-  **Patients; Carers; Relatives and Visitors:** "Challenge staff about hand hygiene at point of care".

## DID YOU KNOW... 80% of diseases are spread by touch

A staggering 80% of communicable diseases are transferred by touch alone which means that they can be easily prevented by implementing proper hand washing techniques. Touching food with contaminated hands for example spreads food-borne illnesses such as Salmonella, E. coli and diarrhoeal infection. **Damp hands spread bacteria too...** Even if you do give your hands a good scrub after using the bathroom, if you don't dry them thoroughly afterwards, your efforts could be counter-productive. Only 20% of us say that we dry our hands after washing which is rather concerning considering that damp hands are 1000 times more likely to spread bacteria than dry hands.



## WINTER INFECTIONS STILL HAPPEN...

As there are some glimmers of sunshine, we may be hoping that viral gastro-enteritis, which many associate with winter, will disappear for the next few months. Clusters of cases still occur all year round in both community and healthcare settings. To keep your area safe please continue to discourage visitors who are or have been either unwell with diarrhoea and/or vomiting in the last 48 hours or have been caring for someone in the last 48 hours who has been symptomatic. It is also imperative that staff are aware of the need to remain vigilant when accepting admissions/transfers to ensure that they have asked questions relating to prevalence of symptoms within a ward/area and in the individual being transferred.



**JUST ASK...  
COULD IT BE SEPSIS**  
It's a simple question  
that can save a life.

**Sepsis** is a potentially life-threatening condition, however it can be easily treated if caught early. Within the Trust, protocols based on the National Sepsis Trust Toolkits have been launched. The symptoms of sepsis will present differently between adults and children and depending on your clinical role or even non clinical role as a friend or relative, there is a tool to help promptly identify sepsis that you can refer to. Take the time to think... "could this be sepsis?" If so, act immediately. Within the Trust refer to specific guidance for your setting and remember the National Sepsis Trust guidance is available for everyone, medical staff, nurses and therapists and also carers.

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If you require further information about any item in this newsletter please contact the Infection Prevention & Control Nurses on 01386 502552/32552

## INFECTION TRAVELS...



- The problem with not cleansing your hands is that you then transfer micro-organisms some of which may cause infections, to everything you touch. You may not think this is a problem but studies have found:
-  Handbags can carry up to 10,000 bacteria per square inch and 30% of bags tested were found to have faecal bacteria on them.
  -  Smartphones can carry more than 30,000 bacteria units on their surface.
  -  Touching a handrail on a staircase may bring you into contact with 5000 hands – many of which may be unwashed...

As healthcare professionals it is known that the main route for the transmission of infection is from hands so **YES** hand hygiene can help to fight antibiotic resistance and also prevent sepsis.

**Please be alert in your workplace and check that all aspects of infection prevention and control are in place ensuring consistent provision of clean, safe care and minimising infection 100% of the time.**

**'SINGLE USE'** The term 'single use' means that the **medical device** is intended to be used on an **individual** patient during a **single** procedure and then discarded in the appropriate waste stream. The device is not intended to be reprocessed and used on the same patient or on another patient. Items that are single use will have this symbol on the packaging or on the device and if looking, you will notice the symbol on many items or devices that you use. It is saying don't use me twice just use me once.



Thank you to the Romans for creating soap, because it's like a 'do-it-yourself' vaccine when used correctly to wash your hands!! Look after yourself and others.



Sometimes the term single use is confused with single patient use which means the medical device may be used for more than one episode of use on **one patient only**; the device may undergo some form of **reprocessing** between each use and this must be in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. Please keep your eyes open and if you have any concerns over devices or equipment with the single use symbol on, which are being re-used, please contact the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team. Interested in knowing more about the symbols on medical devices? A list and explanation is available on the MHRA Medical Devices Cryptic Clues poster in this [Web Link](#).

## CARING FOR SOMEONE WITH A KNOWN INFECTION

Always make sure people who need to know are informed, the:

- 👉 housekeeping team so they can ensure cleaning is appropriate
- 👉 receiving unit prior to a transfer or out patient appointment
- 👉 patient so that relatives/visitors can be made aware if they are vulnerable or this is required.

If you need clarification on precautions required, please contact Infection Prevention and Control Nurses who will advise based on infection and the setting you are working in.

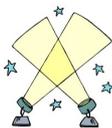


## THOUGHT Taken from an extract of James Gallagher presenter, The Second Genome BBC radio 4



- 👉 You're more microbe than human – if you count all the cells in your body, only 43% are human. The rest is our microbiome and includes bacteria, viruses, fungi and single celled archaea. The greatest concentration of this microscopic life is in the dark murky depths of our oxygen deprived bowels.
- 👉 The human genome – the full set of genetic instructions for a human being - is made up of 20,000 instructions called genes but add all the genes in our microbiome together and the figure comes out at between 2 million and 20 million microbial genes.
- 👉 Understanding this hidden half of ourselves – our microbiome- is rapidly transforming understanding of diseases from allergy to Parkinson's.
- 👉 No matter how well you wash, nearly every nook and cranny of your body is covered in microscopic creatures.
- 👉 What makes us human, is the combination of our own DNA plus the DNA of our gut microbes.

## Spotlight on: VANCOMYCIN



**Did you know?** Vancomycin has activity against a wide range of gram-positive bacteria. It is administered intravenously except when used for *Clostridium difficile* treatment when it can be used only orally. Vancomycin resistant Enterococci have become more prevalent in recent years and can lead to infections that are very difficult to treat. This is one of the reasons why it is important to only use vancomycin when absolutely necessary and check for any previous resistance.



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By 2050 it is estimated that deaths due to antibiotic resistance will be greater than deaths due to cancer and road traffic accidents combined!

## Be Waste Aware... OFFENSIVE WASTE STREAM



**Prevent; Reuse; Recycle; Recover** are key words in relation to waste, with the last resort being disposal by either landfill or incineration. Everyone has to be mindful of how much waste is produced whether at home or at work and more importantly of the waste's final destination. In healthcare, huge amounts of different wastes are generated including Household, Offensive, Hazardous, Amalgam, Sharps, Chemical, Pharmaceutical, Anatomical etc. so much waste that one wonders if, as the generator of the waste, we can make a difference to the waste's end point? The answer is yes we can by segregating waste into the correct waste streams. Did you know that Offensive waste produced by the Trust and collected by PHS is taken to PHS's lifecycle plant? PHS lifecycle has a unique selling point of 'nothing to landfill'. Here the waste is processed; metal and glass are removed then the waste, including the bag, is shredded, chemically treated to render it safe and deodorised, re-shredded to make it finer and then squeezed into bales which are wrapped in a similar way to a secured suitcase at the airport. The final wrapped bales are transported to Sweden, a country ahead of the game in waste recycling/recovery, who use the waste to generate energy.



## REMEMBER YOUR PATIENT'S URINARY CATHETER PASSPORT!

Developed by the Continence and Infection Prevention and Control Nurses and the CCG. This patient held document was launched last year to support the provision of evidence based care. All the facts relating to dates of and reasons for, catheterisations can be in one document together with general information for patients regarding the care of an indwelling catheter. Worcestershire residents with a long term catheter should now have been issued with this resource.



## KNOW THE CORRECT WASTE STREAM

When disposing of healthcare waste in a healthcare setting, think carefully about which waste stream you are putting the waste into, particularly the difference between Offensive - generally waste contaminated with blood/body fluid from someone who does not have an infection and Hazardous - generally waste from someone with a known or suspected infection or waste that is contaminated with a pharmaceutical product or reagent. Check the waste bin labels and ensure the correct bag is in the correct bin. Offensive waste is a yellow bag with one or more black stripes (often known as tiger bag waste). Contact the IPC team if you are unsure which waste to put in which waste stream. Make a difference - Be Waste Aware.



Don't forget to visit [www.worcestershirehealth.nhs.uk](http://www.worcestershirehealth.nhs.uk) for all resources linked to infection prevention and control!