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Infection Control Newsletter for Worcestershire Primary Care and Mental Health Partnership Trusts



BARE BELOW THE ELBOWS...

The recommendations con-

tained within the Department of Health (2007) Uniform and Workwear guidance available on their website should be followed by all NHS staff. It recommends that consideration is given to items of attire that may inadvertently come into clinical contact with a patient or detract from the effectiveness of hand hygiene. Questions have recently been directed to the infection control team regarding why some staff comply and others do not... In summary, recommendations relating to those carrying out direct patient care include:

- ✎ The wearing of short-sleeved shirts/blouses as opposed to long sleeves, (bare below the elbows). This is to promote effective hand hygiene and also minimise any potential risk of sleeves/cuffs becoming contaminated.
- ✎ The wearing of a plain wedding ring is considered acceptable however stoned rings, watches or bracelets, nail art and jewellery are not recommended as they can harbour micro-organisms and reduce compliance with hand hygiene.
- ✎ The wearing of neck-ties (other than bow-ties) when undertaking direct patient care is also not promoted due to the potential for contamination to occur during patient care activities.

These recommendations as well as applying to clinical staff will also apply to staff such as housekeeping staff who are required to cleanse their hands regularly during the course of their work.

The appropriate use of personal protective equipment also helps to minimise the risk of infection. This includes disposable plastic aprons, gloves (latex low protein, powder free, vinyl/nitrile) and eye/face protection. These items should be accessible to all staff who may come into

actual or potential contact with blood, body fluids or substances that are hazardous to health. A single use disposable plastic apron, should be worn for every episode of direct patient care (changed between each patient and also between dirty and clean tasks with the same patient), invasive procedures or when undertaking tasks where actual or potential splashing of blood, body fluids or substances that are hazardous to health.

BELIEVE ACHIEVE SUCCEED...



The Infection Prevention and Control Annual Product Exhibition and Study Day is planned for 20 May 2010 at Charles Hastings Education Centre. If you are interested in hearing Dr Jane Stockley Consultant Microbiologist talk about "3 Infections that are on the Increase", discussing the provision of "Clean, Safe Care", want some information on "Infections Presenting in Drug Users" or are concerned about "Potential Pitfalls, Problems and Hazards relating to Infection Control" please contact us on 01386 502552 or 01905 681531 to book a place. In the afternoon choose from a number of different topics including Safe Management of Waste, Clean and Aseptic Techniques, Hand Hygiene, Personal Protective Clothing, Decontamination Practices or use of Antimicrobial Agents... Interested please ring and book a place!

Worcestershire **NHS**
Primary Care and Mental Health Partnership Trust

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

DO YOU KNOW ALL YOU SHOULD?



There are a number of infection prevention and control facts you should know in relation to the areas you work in. These include being able to demonstrate a knowledge of:

- ✎ infections that present and how they are managed (including a knowledge of MRSA screening)
- ✎ when not to come to work eg stay off work for 48 hours following viral gastro-enteritis
- ✎ how to deal with spillages of blood/body fluids
- ✎ what the cleaning schedules for environment/equipment are and the colour coding system in use
- ✎ how to contact the Infection Prevention and Control Team for advice
- ✎ where to access policies and procedures and leaflets on infections for patient/staff us
- ✎ what actions to take following an inoculation injury

If you are unsure on any of the above then please contact us for more information...



ANTHRAX OUTBREAK IN HEROIN USERS

Anthrax is a rare and very serious bacterial infection caused by the organism *Bacillus anthracis*. Since December 2009 there has been an ongoing outbreak of anthrax among heroin users in the UK, a number of whom have died. The anthrax is thought to be acquired from contaminated heroin (or the cutting agent mixed with heroin) with anthrax spores. Drug users may become infected through injecting, inhaling or snorting the contaminated drugs. It is extremely rare that anthrax can be spread from person to person. Three cases of anthrax have now been seen in an injecting drug user in England. Similar cases were first seen in Scotland in December 2009 with 24 cases confirmed in Scotland. The Health Protection Agency has produced advice for injecting drug users and guidelines on the clinical evaluation and management of people with possible cutaneous anthrax in England. These are available on their website www.hpa.org.uk. **In general Standard Infection Prevention and Control Precautions apply, because the organism forms spores, additional precautions are required when discarding waste, human tissues and items contaminated with blood and body fluid. As always all cuts and abrasions should be covered with occlusive dressings.** If anthrax infection is suspected discuss the case immediately with the Consultant Medical Microbiologist at either Worcestershire Royal Hospital or the Alexandra Hospital Redditch.

NEWSFLASH – C DIF OBJECTIVE..

A new *Clostridium difficile* objective will be introduced to reduce infections further and ensure all NHS organisations strive towards minimisation. This follows the success in reducing *C dif* infections across the country, with figures dropping by 35 per cent since 2007 - exceeding the national target of 30 per cent by 2010-11! Over three years, the new *C dif* objective will help to reduce variation and could deliver a further national reduction of around 55 per cent. The objective will require Trusts with the highest rates of infection to make the biggest reductions and challenge those with the lowest rates to sustain them.



NEW GUIDANCE FOR FARM PARK VISITS

As we are hopefully approaching the spring and summer visits to open farms and petting farms will obviously increase. The Health Protection Agency and Health and Safety Executive have jointly published a timely reminder of good practice to help reduce the risk of infection to visitors whilst recognising that open farms provide valuable recreational and educational experiences. The key recommendation for those visiting these areas is to understand the importance of good hand hygiene practices, this includes:

- ☞ Washing hands thoroughly with soap and water which reduces the chance of infection.
- ☞ Remembering to wash hands after touching an animal, before eating or drinking, and after removing clothing and shoes worn on the farm.
- ☞ Ensuring that children are closely supervised to ensure that they wash their hands properly.



Hand washing is something learnt at a very early age yet many people don't do it when they should or don't do it thoroughly. The use of a light box can promote a good technique as will show areas of the hand that are missed when washing. If you would like to borrow the "Glow and Tell" light box for use in your area please contact Gail Preece on 01905 681531.



More detailed guidance is available on www.hpa.org.uk.

2010 TEACHING PLANNED



With the start of a new year a new training programme has been planned, flyers will be sent out nearer the time but just in case you wish to plan ahead and see what is on offer the dates of the days and groups of staff they relate to are detailed below.

- ☞ May 20th main infection control conference and product exhibition
- ☞ June 15th PCT provider community staff (qualified and non qualified)
- ☞ September 14 Community Mental Health Staff
- ☞ September 28 Main Study Day for Healthcare Assistants
- ☞ November 4 Study Day for Community Hospital Staff (qualified and non qualified)
- ☞ November 10 Study Day for Nursing Staff in General Practice

In addition to this, an accredited module is available through the University of Worcester and details on this and all the above courses can be obtained from Gail Preece on 01905 681531. Online training can be accessed through the NHS core learning unit on www.infectioncontrol.nhs.uk and Infection Control training for PCT provider services staff and Mental Health Trust staff is also included in induction and minimising the risk refresher training provided through Central Training Services. If you would like a training session in your area please contact us for more information...