



# DE~BUGGED

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

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

### HUGE THANK YOU FROM US

We are still on our COVID-19 journey and whilst lots of processes are in place there is still much that is new and changing. As a team we have to thank team WHCT staff for their support, commitment and high standards of IPC practice. We have achieved so much and so many colleagues have contributed and continue to do so to ensure we continue to consistently provide clean safe care. Staff in inpatient areas, clinic settings, neighbourhood teams, mental health and LD teams, therapy colleagues, nurses, medics, dentists, managers and directors, housekeeping teams, procurement, estates colleagues, EBME, portering teams and the list continues. SARS-CoV-2 has evolved at a dizzying pace and guidance has changed regularly to reflect this new and evolving knowledge providing many challenges for all of us. Thank you to colleagues for bearing with us during this time when our service just like yours has changed totally, we are planning our return to normal but it will be when everyone else in the Trust has completed



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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

Please give us a follow on TWITTER WHCT\_infection

**THE LAST FEW WEEKS** have been busy in IPC; patient follow up and surveillance continues, keeping an eye out for the latest IPC guidance and updates as well as continuing to make sure teams can access appropriate resources. Over the last six weeks, 100 free standing gel dispensers have been placed across the Trust to enhance ease of effective hand hygiene; top up stations have been provided to over 40 teams to enable point of use gel stocks to be easily maintained and signage for entrances (pull up banners and/or pavement signs) have been distributed as well as posters. Still to come, for unmanned reception areas are wall mounted dispensers for masks, this will enhance security and hopefully prolong supplies. These are likely to be placed during August.

During visits out there have been so many varied questions and discussions about COVID-19 something that we are all learning about together.



Remember out of hours urgent advice is available from the on call medical microbiologist via switchboard at either Worcestershire Royal Hospital or the Alexandra Hospital Redditch.

The Director with responsibility for Infection, Prevention and Control in the Trust is the Director of Nursing and Quality Michelle Greatorex.

**INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL** has changed because of COVID-19, we have additional practices BUT all of our usual standards must remain in place. Detailed below are some quick prompts to review in your workplace.

- 👉 Knowledge on the Health & Social Care Act 2008 (updated 2015) which provides information on how to ensure that infection prevention and control is embedded into our healthcare areas and the Trust.
- 👉 When not to come to work e.g. if you have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting which might be infectious (remember 48 hours symptom free before returning), have symptoms which could be linked to COVID-19 or have been identified as a contact.
- 👉 Cleaning schedules for environment/equipment in the areas we work in and what actions to take if spillages of blood/body fluids occurs to ensure that it is managed safely.
- 👉 How to manage a needlestick or inoculation injury.
- 👉 Ensure you are aware of the signs and symptoms of sepsis and actions to take.
- 👉 If prescribing antibiotics, ensure appropriate agent is used. Refer to primary care antibiotic prescribing guidelines. Indicate the Need, Indication, Choice of agent, How long, and Evaluate (NICHE).

**Practical ways that we can all further enhance IPC:**

- 👉 Know how to manage infections within your setting and seek advice if you have any questions or concerns.
- 👉 Always suspect infection where clinical signs are present, it does not have to be COVID-19 which we need to include in our diagnostic review but we need to remember other infections too. Appropriate information linked to infection risks is discussed prior to patient transfer or discharge.
- 👉 Hand hygiene products and personal protective equipment (PPE) are available and their use is promoted. Wipes for cleaning of equipment, disinfecting surfaces or cleaning hands are available and used appropriately.
- 👉 Vaccination is promoted within your patient population and with your colleagues. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection and can help protect staff and patients.
- 👉 Posters are displayed to promote best practice and regularly reviewed.
- 👉 Sharps bins and waste are handled and stored safely.



**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.**

## HOW DOES SARS-COV-2 SPREAD?

The virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks or sings :-). These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).



## THINK SOCIAL DISTANCING

this has changed the way that we work, some things to consider when thinking about how we continue to comply with 2 metre separation of people and reducing risk of infection:

- 👉 Cleanse hands regularly throughout the day in addition to all the usual moments for hand hygiene, this can be using wipes, gel or hand washing. Promote hand hygiene on entering and exiting areas and after coughing or sneezing.
- 👉 Think about cough hygiene, minimise contamination, catch it, bin it, kill it.
- 👉 Make sure you have hand hygiene products, tissues and multi-surface detergent wipes to hand and accessible to your patients. Think about the surfaces you touch and do not touch your face unless your hands are clean.
- 👉 If you are wearing PPE wear it appropriately so it protects you and those around you.
- 👉 In reception areas or office areas, limit the number of seats and plan so that there is at least 2 metres between seats.
- 👉 Think about how you can minimise footfall/visitors to a site. Can staff work differently and possibly not report to base or have staggered start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times. In communal staff areas put in measures to ensure safe distances can be maintained think about alternative areas or staggering break times. You can put up signs to remind each other, tape out distances, think what the best visual reminders are for you and your team.
- 👉 Promote to all staff the need to regularly clean common contact surfaces in reception, office, access control points and also any desk items, including phones, keyboard, screen, computer mouse, desk, chair arms etc. Ideally clean with a multi surface detergent wipe when you arrive but also before you leave so you leave as you would like to find and before use know that you have cleaned how you want it to be.
- 👉 Use technology to meet virtually instead of face to face meetings, if meeting think about distancing...
- 👉 Look after each other and prompt colleagues to think about any symptoms of COVID-19 illness they have and need to go home if these are apparent and follow up on screening, also the need to be excluded from work if someone in their household is symptomatic.

**Keep hydrated** don't wait until you're thirsty to drink. Drink cool water before you start your shift and as regularly as you can to reduce the possibility of dehydration.



## MASK ETIQUETTE

Please make sure you avoid those too often seen lapses in mask wearing amongst the general population.

Masks should be worn covering the nose and mouth, masks worn on chins and foreheads don't provide respiratory protection and risk spreading SARS-CoV-2 and other infections. If you are in a setting or undertaking tasks at work or when out and about when you should be wearing a mask, please make sure you do. They protect you and also everyone around you. In the Trust the use of IIR masks is a set standard in all buildings where patients are seen/present unless it is a COVID-19 secure area. A mask can protect you from acquiring COVID-19 and also stop you giving it to someone else. Yes they are uncomfortable but they are necessary.

Always ensure hands are cleansed prior to putting on mask and also after you remove the mask. Please take care when wearing your IIR mask at work, if you do it right, it will protect you, your patients and your colleagues but if done badly, it will increase the risk that it is designed to reduce, as a team we need to look after each other. Stay safe.

If you are undertaking an aerosol generating procedure please contact the IPC Team to discuss practices which need to be in place during the procedure and for the hour following, ensure you have been fit tested for a respirator.

## WINTER INFECTIONS...



It is likely to be a challenging winter with our usual infections and also potential for COVID-19 illness, it is essential that we make plans and ensure we are prepared. The IPC team will be sending out a check list for inpatient areas initially to raise awareness of actions we can take.

### INFLUENZA

The best way to prevent influenza is to have your flu jab. Keep yourself and those you care about safe.

#### REMEMBER TO CONSIDER YOUR PATIENTS

In inpatient settings where patients may miss the opportunity to receive a flu vaccine due to their hospital stay please ensure that they can access one and don't miss out. ALSO check that admissions in, if eligible for flu vaccine, have taken this opportunity or support them in obtaining a flu vaccine during their stay if they wish. This year the flu jab is more important than ever before and will be key to reduce the amount of respiratory illness this winter and minimise infection risks.



### VIRAL GASTRO-ENTERITIS

Clusters of cases of viral gastro-enteritis have started to present in community and healthcare settings. It is 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 including whether they have previously been positive.** Remember for staff who present with symptoms and infection cannot be excluded they need to be 48 hours symptom free before returning to work. Please ask these questions for all transfers or admissions and do not rely on others to provide the information. **Contact Infection Prevention and Control on 01386 502552 for advice.**



## HOW TO MINIMISE CONTACTS

How embarrassing would it be if you were found to be positive and had so many contacts.... Social distancing and use of PPE will minimise the number of contacts and spread of infection, this is the reason for the practices that we have in place. Thinking about this at work... Any member of staff that has had the following contact while not wearing appropriate PPE or who has had a breach in their PPE and:

- 👉 has had face-to-face contact (within one metre) of a confirmed case, including being coughed on, having a face-to-face conversation, or having skin-to-skin physical contact
- 👉 has had any contact within one metre for one minute or longer with a confirmed case, without face-to-face contact
- 👉 has spent more than 15 minutes within 2 metres of a confirmed case
- 👉 has cleaned a personal or communal area of where a confirmed case has been located (note this only applies to the first time cleaning the personal or communal area)
- 👉 has been notified that they're a contact of a colleague who has been confirmed as a COVID-19 case in the 48 hours before symptom onset or test result, if so will need to self isolate for 14 days.

BE READY FOR WINTER INFECTIONS....KNOW HOW TO IDENTIFY AND WHAT ACTIONS TO TAKE

**CORONAVIRUS** Always consider but don't dismiss other infections. Remember protect yourself and others.



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