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

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

Clean Safe Care for All – It is in YOUR hands

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Each year the **SAVE LIVES: Clean Your Hands** campaign aims to raise awareness on the importance of hand hygiene in health care and to 'bring people together' in support of hand hygiene improvement globally. The World Health Organisation calls on everyone to be inspired by the global movement to achieve better health and well-being for all people at all ages, access to quality essential health care services and access to safe, effective essential medicines and vaccines. Infection prevention and control, including hand hygiene, is central to this and is a practical and evidence-based approach with demonstrated impact on quality of care and patient safety across all levels of the health system. This year's theme for World Hand Hygiene Day, focused on recognising that safety and quality of care is enhanced through hand hygiene and that a strong quality and safety culture encourages people to cleanse their hands at the right times and with the right products. The slogan for this year was 'Unite, talk and work together on hand hygiene for high quality safer care everywhere'. Take some time to reflect when you cleanse hands that you are using the right agent, an appropriate technique to cover all of the hand, the opportunities for hand hygiene are not being missed and discuss your thoughts with a colleague. One of the questions we had this year was about use of alcohol hand gel and potential for infections to become resistant. Currently there is no evidence of this, alcohol hand gel is extremely effective for rapid hand decontamination when hands are visibly clean, hand washing is still promoted though if caring



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

for someone with diarrhoea and/or vomiting with alcohol hand rub used following hand washing.

We are on Twitter, you can follow us at https://twitter.com/WHCT_Infection we will be using our account to highlight key messages, forthcoming events and promote clean safe care. Help us increase our followers and spread our IPC messages and information!




Hand sanitizers can be used often

An alcohol-based sanitizer does not create antibiotic resistance. Unlike other antiseptics and antibiotics, pathogens (harmful germs) do not seem to develop resistance to alcohol-based sanitizers.



A message from the IPC Team to Team HWHCT Thank you all for leading by example, promoting hand hygiene, making sure we have the facilities and products we need where we need them to remind and encourage others to cleanse their hands. We are very grateful to you all for your contributions to consistent provision of clean safe .



Have you an interest and passion for infection prevention and control (IPC) or want to know more?

Why don't you become one of our link staff?

You would act as a link between the IPC team and your clinical area; assisting in raising awareness and promoting best practice as a means of minimising the risk of infection and promoting clean safe care. Don't just think you would be expected to fully understand this role as this comes with time and support from the IPC team. You would also be invited to regular training sessions with an aim of increasing your knowledge and understanding of IPC. guiding you on ways to enhance the role and your impact. It would be good to have you as part of our link team – If you are interested contact us on 01386 502552.

Scarlet fever surveillance is showing an increase in recent notification levels in line with usual seasonal pattern. Notifications have been very low since March 2020, reflecting measures to limit transmission of SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). Increases have also been noted in chickenpox cases, again reflecting a seasonal rise typical for this time of year and also over the last two years there has been very low numbers of chicken pox meaning that there is a greater number of children who are susceptible. Scarlet fever is a contagious infection that mostly affects young children. It's easily treated with antibiotics, it is caused by group A Streptococcus or group A strep, while increases in severe presentations in children have not been seen so far this season, it remains important that scarlet fever cases are treated promptly with antibiotics to limit further spread and reduce risk of potential complications in cases and household contacts. The first signs of scarlet fever can be flu like symptoms, including a high temperature, a sore throat and swollen glands in the neck. A rash appears 12 to 48 hours later which is like small, raised bumps, it usually starts on the chest and stomach and then spreads. The rash makes skin feel rough, like sandpaper. A white coating also appears on the tongue. This peels off and leaves the tongue red, swollen and covered in little bumps called "strawberry tongue".



NEWS FLASH BUGS IN THE NEWS

A diagnosis has been made in England in a patient who had recently travelled to Nigeria, where they are believed to have caught Monkey Pox before coming to the UK. **Monkeypox** is a rare viral infection from which most people recover in a few weeks, it does not spread easily between people and the risk to the wider public are very low. The first ever recorded occurrence of the virus in the UK was in 2018, and since then a handful of cases have been confirmed. Initial symptoms of monkeypox include fever, headache, muscle aches, backache, swollen lymph nodes, chills and exhaustion. A rash can develop, often beginning on the face, then spreading to other parts of the body. The rash changes and goes through different stages before finally forming a scab, which later falls off. It can be spread when someone is in close contact with an infected person. The virus can enter the body through broken skin, the respiratory tract or through the eyes, nose or mouth and is spread by contact with infected animals such as monkeys, rats and squirrels or by virus contaminated objects, such as bedding and clothing.

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.

You're Invited to a



FACTS TO STOP BARBECUE BUGS...

If you want to serve up a sensational barbecue that also helps keep your family and friends safe, take the following simple steps to avoid food poisoning. Cases of food poisoning almost double during the summer, and research shows that the undercooking of raw meat and the contamination of bacteria onto the food we eat are among the main reasons. Think about whether you could pre-cook food and then give it a final finish on the barbecue if there is a chance it may not cook thoroughly, remember charred on the outside doesn't mean it is cooked so always cut open and check it is cooked right through. Avoid cross-contamination and store raw meat separately before cooking, use different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water and dry them before handling your food for the barbecue and after handling raw foods including meat, fish, eggs and vegetables. Keep plates and cutlery away from raw meat and fish and never serve cooked food on a plate or surface that's had raw meat or fish on it, and don't use cutlery or marinades that have been in contact with raw meat. There's no point in serving up food with a flourish if you're adding bacteria back into the mix.

 **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, wearing a mask does not make it easy to drink but it is important you find a safe place to remove your mask and top up on fluids regularly.

Wearing a mask... over the nose is where it goes, under the chin is where it should begin. Did you know your nose is both a spreader of and magnet for COVID-19. Out and about more people have the 'nose exposer' look when wearing a mask. Please follow the rules to protect yourself and others.



The IPC Team are promoting their **BE SMART** resource to ensure we all remain on track with IPC practices, precautions and management, it can be used as a checklist to review standards and promotes a fresh eyes concept. Copies of this resource are available for inpatient and community teams... interested please contact us for a copy.



Living with COVID-19 This document outlines the government's plan for living with COVID-19. It is underpinned by vaccines and the vaccine uptake rate. It sets the scene to remove the remaining legal domestic restrictions which are in place linked to isolation and management of positives and contacts as well as testing recommendations and mask wearing but continues to try and protect people who are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. It is important to note that this guidance does not relate to healthcare provision and there is specific NHS guidance for staff, patients and visitors. As we restart from COVID-19 it is important to reflect on how our practices have changed and ensure that beneficial practices and process continue to remain in place. The government is also reviewing innovations and opportunities as part of their response. It is really important to remain aware of the rapidly changing IPC guidance as we continue our journey back to a new normal, some examples will include screening changes, respecting personal space and visitor guidance.



As well as sun cream... remember insect repellent as incidence of painful horsefly bites is expected to soar this summer.

Sunny days are cause for celebration but they are good news for biting flies too. Horseflies are most active in the summer months and although known for biting horses, they also have a taste for human skin. Conservationists say they are seeing huge numbers of the blood-sucking insects this year and people are being bitten regularly. The insect bites can be painful and cause blistering or swelling, and bring the possibility of infection. Experts have provided their tips on how to avoid being bitten or what to do if a horsefly bites you – including using insect repellent, keeping the wound clean and applying a cold compress. Horsefly bites can cause more severe reactions than other types of insect because of the way people's immune systems react to proteins in the fly's body. They also release a chemical which stops the blood clotting so they can drink more, which contributes to the body's response. The bites can be slow to heal and have the potential to become infected.



ANTIBIOTICS ARE WONDERFUL PILLS BUT...

When antibiotics were first used in the 1940s they were a revolution in medicine. Before that, diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis were often fatal and even a minor wound with an infection could kill. Since then, antibiotics have saved hundreds of millions of lives, the huge question is, will this be able to continue? There are clearly actions we can all take to try and ensure that antibiotics remain effective for as long as possible. Scientists believe that some of our issues with resistant bacteria are of our own making as antibiotics have been so widely used. Some bacteria have mutated and developed resistance to the drugs designed to kill them. A study commissioned by the British government estimates that by 2050, 10 million people worldwide could die each year from bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics. This reduced effectiveness will possibly have a huge impact on healthcare as there are many procedures undertaken where we rely on antibiotics; cancer chemotherapy, transplants, hip replacements, knee replacements, colorectal surgery or simply the use of antibiotics to treat a urinary tract infection, chest infection or cellulitis. Regardless of indication, treatment relies on effective antibiotics. The issue of antibiotic resistance is a global issue and actions that we can all take contribute to safeguarding antibiotics. Within healthcare we promote the concept of NICHE, consider need, indications for treatment, choice of agent (prescribing to be informed by our agreed prescribing guidance), how long treatment needs to be and evaluating its effectiveness.

Apart from this, there are still a number of actions that can be taken by healthcare staff and these include:

- 👉 promoting actions to prevent infection (consider vaccination, hydration, appropriate management of invasive devices, consistent application of infection prevention and control practices).
- 👉 obtaining cultures where relevant prior to commencing therapy where this is possible (but not delaying commencement).
- 👉 avoiding inappropriate use of broad-spectrum antibiotics.
- 👉 discussions with patients to ensure they are aware that:
 - 👉 antibiotics are for bacterial infections
 - 👉 actions they can take to reduce the need for antibiotics, consider hydration, vaccination etc.
 - 👉 they should fully complete courses of antibiotics, not share antibiotics with others or take antibiotics that are not prescribed for them.

Please play an active role in antimicrobial stewardship encouraging the appropriate use of antimicrobials (including antibiotics) to minimise overuse, improve patient outcomes, reduce microbial resistance and decrease the spread of infections.



Don't forget to visit www.worcestershirehealth.nhs.uk for all resources linked to infection prevention and control!