

Routine Practices

Frequently Asked Questions – Glove Use

Please note the term “patient” used in this document to refer to patients, residents, or clients (P/R/C).

1. **When should I wear gloves?**

Put on gloves when it is anticipated your hands will have contact with blood, body fluid, secretions and excretions, mucous membranes, draining wounds and non – intact skin; or if the caregiver has an open cut or abrasions on the hands.

After completing the task for which they were used, remove gloves immediately, discard, and then perform hand hygiene.

2. **Why do I have to perform hand hygiene before putting gloves on?**

Hands must be clean and dry prior to putting gloves on. Gloves may be contaminated by the health care workers’ dirty hands in the process of putting the gloves on. Gloves can have microscopic holes, which would allow organisms to pass from your hands to your patient if hand hygiene is not completed prior to putting on gloves. The environment under the gloves also provides a good environment for further growth of microorganisms.

3. **Why do I have to perform hand hygiene after taking my gloves off?**

Several studies provide evidence showing the **appropriate use of gloves** can help reduce transmission of pathogens in health care settings. However, gloves do not provide complete protection against hand contamination. They may have micro-tears that are not visible, and germs multiply in the warm moist environment under gloves. When removing gloves, it is very difficult to remove them without contaminating hands in the process. Therefore once gloves are removed, hands must be cleaned. The use of gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene.

Hand hygiene must always be performed after glove removal.

4. **Can I double glove and then remove them as they become dirty?**

No; wear only one pair of gloves at a time, and perform hand hygiene each time gloves are removed.

There may be exceptional circumstances as directed by IP&C (e.g., Ebola), where double gloves with additional hygiene measures may be recommended.

5. **Can I ever use the same pair of gloves for different tasks?**

No; never re-use the same pair of gloves. Gloves are disposable and for one time use only. Remove gloves, perform hand hygiene and replace the gloves if they are still indicated for an additional task. Using the same pair of gloves for different uses or on different patients or their environments increases the risk of transmission of organisms between patients, caregivers and environments.

6. **Can I store clean gloves in my pocket until I need them?**

No; do not put gloves into your pockets as your pockets are not clean.



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7. **Can I put dirty gloves in my pocket until I find a trash can to dispose of them?**
No; place dirty gloves directly into a garbage container immediately after use.

8. **Can I wash gloves and re-use them?**
No; gloves are only indicated for one time use. Washing or rubbing with alcohol based hand rub impacts the glove integrity and has not been shown to be effective in removing inoculated microorganisms from gloves.

9. **Can gloves be worn for an extended period of time?**
No; as routine gloves do not have the integrity for long term wear. Gloves are useful for short tasks. If gloves are required to be worn for an extended period of time, regular glove changes, with hand hygiene, are appropriate.

