

31. Universal Precautions

Universal precautions are guidelines that promote a safe and healthy work environment. Spectrum personnel will be expected to follow these guidelines at all times both for their own protection and for the protection of individuals receiving services.

The Health and Safety committee will review any relevant public health advisories and changes to WorkSafe regulations, and will disseminate information to employees, volunteers and sub-contractors as appropriate.

(a) Personal contact

Note: All open skin lesions on staff and individuals should be covered.

Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper handwashing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body – particularly the eyes, nose and mouth – or to other surfaces that are touched.

Wash for 20 seconds with soap and warm running water:

- (i) Before and after close personal contact;
- (ii) If blood or body fluids come in contact with your skin;
- (iii) After contact with articles soiled with blood or body fluids (bedding, towels, clothing);
- (i) Before and after meals;
- (ii) After using the toilet

Handwashing procedure:

1. Rub hands palm to palm



2. Rub each palm over back of opposing hand



3. Interlace fingers, palm to palm



4. Interlock fingers



5. Rotate each thumb in palm



6. Rotate fingertips in palm



Latex gloves / vinyl gloves: Wear disposable gloves -

- (i) When handling blood and body fluids, ie: - bloody fecal material (stools), urine, respiratory secretions (from coughing, spitting, or nasal discharge), wound drainage, sanitary napkins or tampons;
- (ii) When performing mouth care;
- (iii) When cleaning contaminated supplies or areas;
- (iv) If you have a burn blister, broken skin or open areas on your hands;
- (v) When applying topical ointments;
- (vi) When administering first aid

A pair of gloves should only be worn for one personal care task with one person.

Instructions for putting on gloves:

1. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds
2. Pull glove onto first hand by grasping the glove by the wrist area
3. Pull glove onto second hand, THEN adjust both gloves as necessary

Instructions for taking off gloves:

1. Remove first glove by pinching the outside and peeling it down, so it comes off inside out
2. Slide fingers of this hand under the wrist area of the other glove, and pull down so it comes off inside out
3. Discard gloves in the garbage
4. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds

Masks

Use of masks is recommended if personnel are in very close personal contact or supporting someone who is showing signs of potentially infectious illness (new or persistent cough, fever).

Instructions for putting on a mask:

1. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds
2. Touching only the outside of the mask, secure elastics around ears
3. Position mask snugly on your face, bending the top over your nose, then pull down to completely cover your chin
4. Avoid touching the mask once it is on
5. If mask gets wet or you need to remove it (eg. to eat or make a phone call), discard it and get a new mask

Instructions for taking off a mask:

1. Remove mask by the elastics, not by touching the front of the mask
2. Discard mask in the garbage (for cloth masks, put in laundry)
3. Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds

- (b) Household environment
- (i) Clean kitchen counters with scouring powder to remove food particles. Cloths used in the kitchen should not be used to clean the bathroom.
 - (ii) Clean all spills as they occur, and dispose of all body wastes in the toilet.
 - (iii) Clean the bathroom weekly using disinfectant solution (eg. Clorox, Lysol). Cloths used to clean the bathroom should not be used in food preparation areas.
 - (iv) Wash dishes in hot water only (ie. hot enough to require gloves).
 - (v) When cooking, do not taste from the mixing spoon or lick fingers to test food.
 - (vi) Towels and washcloths should not be shared without laundering in between uses by different people. Toothbrushes, hairbrushes and razors should not be shared.
 - (vii) Items soiled by blood, saliva or other bodily fluids should be cleaned with detergent and water before re-use, or discarded.
 - (viii) Keep living quarters well ventilated. Airborne diseases are less likely to be a problem when diluted by open circulation of fresh air.