

AC03 Infection Control Policy and Procedure

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Background

In the aged care setting infection can easily spread from person to person.

- A client may be infected while receiving care.
- A health worker may be infected while carrying out their duties.
- People who work or interact with clients in a health care setting may be infected.

This transmission of infection is called cross infection. At Belyuen Aged Care we aim to create a safe and healthy work environment. The following procedures outline good practice to ensure infection control.

Policy

Belyuen Aged Care Service will adhere to Australian Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines as appropriate for the activities associated with the level of service.

Scope

This policy shall apply to all facilities and activities associated with Belyuen Aged Care Service including staff, recipients, or visitors to aged care facilities.

Legislative and Policy References

- Australian Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines
- NDIS practice standards set by the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- Aged Care Act 1997 (Cwth)
- Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011 (Cwth)

Definitions

Nil

Infection Control

Transmission of Infection

Infectious agents can be spread in a variety of ways, including:

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- breathing in airborne germs – coughs or sneezes release airborne pathogens, which are then inhaled by others
- touching contaminated objects or eating contaminated food – the pathogens in a person's faeces may be spread to food or other objects, if their hands are dirty
- skin-to-skin contact – the transfer of some pathogens can occur through touch, or by sharing personal items, clothing or objects
- contact with body fluids – pathogens in saliva, urine, faeces or blood can be passed to another person's body via cuts or abrasions, or through the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes.

Assumption of Risk

The basis of good infection control in the workplace is to assume that everyone is potentially infectious. Proper procedures have to be followed at all times. Every workplace will have an appropriate first aid kit, with at least one staff member trained in first aid. Equipment such as gloves, gowns, eye goggles and face shields should be provided if necessary.

Procedures

Workplace infection control – personal hygiene practices

Infection control procedures relating to good personal hygiene include:

- hand washing – the spread of many pathogens can be prevented with regular hand washing. Thoroughly wash your hands with water and soap for at least 15 seconds after visiting the toilet, before preparing food, and after touching clients or equipment. Dry your hands with disposable paper towels
- unbroken skin – intact and healthy skin is a major barrier to pathogens. Cover any cuts or abrasions with a waterproof dressing
- gloves – wear gloves if you are handling body fluids or equipment containing body fluids, if you are touching someone else's broken skin or mucus membrane, or performing any other invasive procedure. Wash your hands between each client and use fresh gloves for each client where necessary
- personal items – don't share towels, clothing, razors, toothbrushes, shavers or other personal items.

Food preparation and workplace infection control

When preparing food:

- Wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Avoid touching your hair, nose or mouth.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.
- Use separate storage, utensils and preparation surfaces for cooked and uncooked foods.
- Wash all utensils and preparation surfaces thoroughly with hot water and detergent after use.

Infection control and workplace cleanliness

Infection control procedures relating to cleanliness in the workplace include:

- regularly washing the floors, bathrooms and surfaces (such as tables and bench tops) with hot water and detergent.
- periodically washing the walls and ceilings.
- thoroughly washing and drying mops, brushes and cloths after every use – drying mops and cloths is particularly important, since many pathogens rely on moisture to thrive.
- using disinfectants to clean up blood and other spills of bodily fluids.
- when using disinfectants – always wearing gloves, cleaning the surfaces before using the disinfectant, and always following the manufacturer's instructions exactly.
- spot cleaning when necessary.

DEALING WITH SPILLS OF BODY FLUIDS

Examples of body fluids include blood, saliva, urine and faeces. When dealing with spills of body fluids, infection control procedures need to be followed carefully. Always:

- Isolate the area.
- Wear gloves, a plastic apron and eye protection, such as goggles.
- Soak up the fluid with disposable paper towels or cover the spill with a granular chlorine-releasing agent for a minimum of 10 minutes. Scoop up granules and waste using a piece of cardboard (or similar), place in a plastic bag and dispose of appropriately.
- Mix one part bleach to 10 parts water and apply to the area for 10 minutes.
- Wash the area with hot water and detergent.
- Dry the area.
- Dispose of paper towelling and gloves appropriately.
- Wash your hands.
- Rinse any contaminated clothing in cold running water, soak in bleach solution for half an hour, then wash separately from other clothing or linen with hot water and detergent.

Workplace infection control – handling contaminated sharps

Infection control procedures when handling needles and other sharp contaminated objects include:

- Never attempt to re-cap or bend used needles.
- Handle by the barrel.
- Place in an appropriate puncture-proof container (that meets the Australian and New Zealand Standards AS 4031:1992 and AS/NZS 4261:1994) – this will be yellow, labelled 'Danger contaminated sharps' and marked with a black biohazard symbol.

Infection control – occupational exposure to body fluids

If you come in contact with blood or body fluids:

- Flush the area with running water.
- Wash the area with plenty of warm water and soap.
- Report the incident to the appropriate staff member.
- Record the incident via the Disease/Injury/Near Miss/Accident (DINMA) reporting procedure.
- Seek medical advice.

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Immediately advise your supervisor of all incidents involving contact with blood or body fluids, and take action to prevent a similar incident from happening again.

Hand Washing

HANDWASHING

Handwashing is the single most effective way to reduce the number of microorganisms on the surface of the skin. It should always be performed:

- before and after contact with another person, for example aged care worker and client,
- before and after eating,
- after using the toilet,
- before and after using gloves,
- after contact with used equipment, and
- immediately following contact with bodily fluids.

Standard handwashing procedure:

- Remove jewellery.
- Wet hands thoroughly all over.
- Use pH neutral soap.
- Lather soap all over hands.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 15-20 seconds. Pay particular attention to the fingertips, thumbs, wrists, finger webs and the backs of the hands.
- Rinse under running water.
- Pat hands dry with paper towels.

BARRIER CREAM

The best protection against bacteria is intact skin, so each time you wash your hands you should apply barrier cream. Take care when cutting your fingernails and pay attention to maintaining intact cuticles. Any wound or abrasion should be covered using a waterproof dressing.

WATERLESS HANDWASHING

There are waterless alcohol-based hand wash solutions that are as effective as soap and water hand washing. These preparations should only be used when there is no visible soiling of the hands. If there is visible soiling, then soap and water hand washing should be used. These waterless preparations contain an emollient and aid in reducing damage to the hands.

It is good practice for aged care recipients to perform hand hygiene and to be educated in the benefits of hand hygiene for effective infection control.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment

Some of the duties that you perform in the workplace may require you to protect yourself from either the environment in which you are working, infectious clients, or to protect the client from you if you are infectious.

Personal protective equipment also includes any substance, such as sunscreen, used to protect health. Belyuen Aged Care will ensure staff are trained in the relevant protective equipment necessary for their workplace. This training covers:

- recognising the risk or hazard,
- knowing when to use protective equipment,
- basic understanding of the equipment and how it is protective,
- selection of the correct equipment,
- safe working practice when using equipment following organisations policies and procedures,
- correct fit and comfort of PPE,
- disposal/cleaning and storage of the goods,
- limitations in use, and
- replacement of equipment.

Yearly refresher courses will be held to ensure that all staff are up to date with the equipment. This regular education on the correct use of the equipment ensures that when staff needs to use protective equipment they fully understand how and when to use which equipment. All equipment for protective purposes must also meet with Australian standards.

Belyuen Aged Care requires all employees to comply with correct personal protective equipment standards while at work.

Revision History

Policy Version	Approval Date	Comments
1	15/03/2021	Original Version – approved CEO
1	9/8/2021	Presented to council