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STAFF NEWSLETTER

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Tracking Infections

The personal protective equipment that is used by medical professionals is determined by what they are doing, and what they anticipate being exposed to in the course of caring for patients. Home Medical Equipment employees do not dress like they are going into the Operating Room. Typically, use of gloves and hand sanitizer is sufficient for most customer encounters, with backup access to a disposable gown and mask if needed.



PRIORITIZED RISKS

Your infection control policies are based upon an assessment of risk. What kind of communicable diseases might you encounter in the home or when working with patients? Homecare staff who are dealing with customers in their private residences or in facilities, as well as staff who clean contaminated equipment are most likely to be exposed to:

Methylene Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA)

Vancomycin Resistant Staph Aureus (VRSA)

Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (VRE)

Hepatitis

Common cold viruses

Influenza (flu)

Clostridium Difficile (C dif)

Because of these infectious risks, consistent use of hand sanitizer, use of gloves when encountering body fluids and hand sanitizer after removal of gloves; use of disinfectant on equipment between customers; periodic disinfecting of transport vehicle interior; and bagging of equipment are activities intended to keep staff healthy and prevent inadvertent cross-contamination to our customers.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE LOG

Accreditation standards also require keeping track of your patient population's types of communicable infections. Remember last year's H1N1 flu scare? If that had blossomed as feared, we would have been wearing masks all the time while servicing customers.

If a patient tells you they've been sick or cancels an appointment because of illness, write it in the Infection Control Log!

Periodic review of this log helps your company know what is going on in the field, and determines whether your policies adequately address these illnesses; or something new needs to be added to the protocol in response to an emerging disease.

AND, it satisfies several accreditation requirements.