

INFECTION CONTROL SNAPSHOT

PPE Reminders: When & Why?



Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is designed to protect the skin and the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth of DHCP from exposure to blood or OPIM. Wearing PPE in specified circumstances to reduce the risk of exposures to bloodborne pathogens is mandated by the OSHA. For basic information on PPE, see the *PPE: Back to Basics* Infection Control SNAPSHOT.

Masks and Protective Eyewear

WHEN? Wear a surgical mask and eye protection with solid side shields (e.g., glasses, face shield) during procedures likely to generate splashing or spattering of blood or other body fluids.

WHY?....to protect the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth from contact with microorganisms...

Protective Clothing

WHEN? Wear protective clothing (e.g., long-sleeved reusable or disposable gown, clinic jacket, laboratory coat) that covers clothing and skin (e.g., forearms) likely to be soiled with blood, saliva, or OPIM.

WHY?....the barrier protection reduces opportunities for transmission of microorganisms in health-care settings by preventing contamination of clothing and by protecting your skin...

Gloves

WHEN? Wear new gloves for each patient when a potential exists for contacting blood, saliva, OPIM, or mucous membranes.

WHY?....wearing gloves provides a protective barrier and prevents contamination of the hands; also, gloves reduce the likelihood that microorganisms present on your hands will be transmitted to patients during patient care procedures....



A Few Reminders.....

- ☑ Wash your hands after removing PPE.
- ☑ Clean reusable PPE with soap & water or if visibly soiled, clean and disinfect reusable PPE.
- ☑ Change masks between patients or during patient treatment if the mask becomes wet.
- ☑ Change protective clothing if visibly soiled; change immediately or as soon as feasible if penetrated by blood or other potentially infectious fluids.
- ☑ Remove gloves that are torn, cut, or punctured as soon as feasible; wash hands before regloving.
- ☑ Wearing gloves does not replace the need for handwashing & handwashing does not eliminate the need for gloves.

Abbreviations: DHCP=Dental Health-Care Personnel; OPIM=Other Potentially Infectious Materials; OSHA=Occupational Safety & Health Administration

Just a few things to think about

- What types of PPE do you have available in your clinic?
- Can you explain why it's necessary to wear the different types of PPE?
- Do you always wash your hands before and after wearing gloves?

If you want more info

- CDC Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings (www.cdc.gov/oralhealth).
- InControl Fact Sheet: Using Personal Protective Equipment: http://airforcemedicine.afms.mil/idc/groups/public/documents/afms/ctb_109777.pdf
- USAF Guidelines for Infection Control in Dentistry (<http://airforcemedicine.afms.mil/decs>).

