

Tool 15: Routine Practices (Standard Precautions)

Routine Practices is the term used by Public Health Agency of Canada to describe the infection prevention and control practices used to prevent the transmission of infections in all health care settings. Some settings may use the term “Standard Precautions” (formerly known as universal precautions).

Routine Practices are infection control practices **used by all employees** and medical staff **at all times** in **all health care settings** to prevent exposure to all body substances from all persons.

Ref: Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). *Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Preventing the Transmission of Infection in Healthcare Settings.*; 2017. Accessed June 8, 2022. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/routine-practices-precautions-healthcare-associated-infections.html>

Basic elements of Routine Practices:

1. Hand hygiene
2. Point of Care Risk Assessment
3. Respiratory hygiene
4. Risk reduction strategies
5. Education of staff/residents/family/visitors

Hand Hygiene

Fraser Health Hand Hygiene Information available on the Internet [here](#)

Hand hygiene is everybody’s responsibility: Health Care Providers (HCPs), clients, visitors, and volunteers. Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the transmission of microorganisms

- Compliance with hand hygiene recommendations requires continuous reinforcement
- Either soap and warm water or alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) is an accepted method of hand hygiene
 - Soap and water are required if hands are visibly soiled
- Residents who can participate in self-care should be taught, encouraged, and reminded of the importance of hand hygiene before eating or preparing food, after using the toilet or other personal hygiene activities, before leaving their homes for common/public areas and when returning home from public places

Point-of-Care Risk Assessment

A Point-of-Care Risk Assessment is the evaluation of the interaction between the Healthcare Provider, the resident, and the environment to determine the potential for exposure to pathogens. Prior to any resident interaction, all HCPs have a responsibility to assess the infectious risk posed to themselves and to others (e.g., other residents/visitors/HCPs).

HCPs do risk assessments many times a day for their safety and the safety of others in the healthcare environment. During a viral Respiratory Illness Outbreak, HCPs should be vigilant in identifying risk of exposure to respiratory Viruses, especially when assisting those who are ill.

PICNET [POCRA](#) tool can be used as a reference to in assessing and mitigating exposure risks

Risk assessments for any interaction include:

- Staff to be aware of resident’s symptoms and whether their symptoms may be consistent with an infectious process
- Whether the resident can follow instructions (e.g., cognitive abilities, mental health condition)
- The setting in which the interaction will take place (e.g., single room vs. multi-bed room vs. outpatient or communal area)
- The type of interaction (e.g., direct care vs. bringing something into the resident’s room)
- The potential for contamination of themselves or any equipment used
- Identification of PPE required to prevent transmission
- Whether all secretion/excretions are contained (e.g., continence, wounds well covered)

Risk-Reduction Strategies

- Using personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Cleaning and disinfection of environment
- Using “single use only” equipment or cleaning and disinfection of reusable equipment **between use**
- Safe disposal of sharps and waste
- Safe laundry practices
- Resident placement, accommodation and flow
- Staff and resident immunization program

Education of Health Care Providers, Residents and Families/Visitors/Volunteers

- Employers should provide all health care providers general education on Care Community policies, which includes:
 - Infection prevention and control best practices.
 - Hand hygiene
 - Chain of infection
 - Environmental cleaning and disinfection
 - Immunization program
 - Occupational Health and Safety protocols

Additional Precautions

Additional precautions are used in addition to routine practices when an infection with a specific mode of transmission is suspected or confirmed.

These are specific and extra measures required in conjunction with routine practices to prevent transmission. Most Viral respiratory infections require Droplet Precautions. Droplet Precautions should be implemented for management of residents with suspected/probable and confirmed VRI for the duration of the communicable period. Please see [Tool 24](#) for list of Common VRI pathogens