

Fact Sheet for health care professionals

Appropriate Glove Use in Health Care

What gloves are used in healthcare?

Gloves used in healthcare are defined as single use disposable gloves and are used during medical procedures or provision of car. These include:

- > examination gloves (sterile or non-sterile)
- > sterile surgical gloves that have specific characteristics of thickness, elasticity, and strength
- chemotherapy gloves not addressed within this document.

Why wear gloves?

- 1. To reduce the risk of contamination of healthcare worker hands with blood and body fluids, including contact with mucous membranes and non-intact skin.
- 2. When indicated as part of contact precautions, to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious agents to the patient's environment and to other patients.

Facts about glove use

- Gloves can act as a vehicle for the transmission of micro-organisms so must be removed and hand hygiene performed as soon as an episode of patient care is completed and prior to leaving the patient room/area.
- Gloves do not provide complete protection against hand contamination due to microscopic defects in the glove material. Therefore, hand hygiene is required after removal.
- Any cuts or abrasions present on hands should be covered with an occlusive dressing prior to donning gloves.
- Gloves should be used during all patient activities that may involve exposure to blood and all other body fluids (excluding sweat) including contact with mucous membranes and non-intact skin.
- Gloves need to be removed when contact with blood or another body fluid, mucous membranes or non-intact skin has ended.
- Gloves must be removed when moving from a contaminated body site to another site (including mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or a medical device) on the same patient.
- If gloves are damaged, then they should be removed immediately, and hand hygiene performed before replacing gloves.
- Gloves are also required when providing any care for all patients requiring contact precautions.
- > The same pair of gloves must not be worn for the care of more than one patient.



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Gloves are NOT indicated when performing the following tasks (except when required for contact precautions or if blood or body fluid exposure is anticipated):

Exposure type	Example
Direct patient exposure	 taking blood pressure taking observations i.e., temperature, pulse SC and IM injections bathing and dressing transporting a patient caring for eyes and ears (without secretions) any vascular access device manipulation (in the absence of
Indirect patient exposure	blood leakage) > using the telephone > writing in the patient chart > giving oral medication > distributing or collecting patient meal trays > placing non-invasive ventilation or oxygen equipment > moving patient furniture
Unnecessary and inappropriate use of gloves can:	

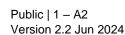
- increase skin issues such as dermatitis.
- lead to unnecessary use of resources and increased costs
- lead to missed opportunities for hand hygiene

References

- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare
- Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care: Glove use and Hand
- Royal College of Nursing: Tools of the Trade Guidance for health care staff on glove use and the prevention of contact dermatitis
- World Health Organisation: Glove use information leaflet (revised August 2009) (who.int)

For more information

Infection Control Service **Communicable Disease Control Branch Department for Health and Wellbeing** Telephone: 1300 232 272 www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/infectionprevention





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