

Infection Control Resource for Pharmacists

Once again pharmacists find themselves in the midst of flu season helping many sniffing, sneezing and coughing patients. So what can you as a pharmacist do to prevent the spread of infection and keep your patients, co-workers and yourself healthy?


A NEW TOOL TO SUPPORT PHARMACY STAFF

At the September Council the College adopted *Infection Control for Regulated Professionals* as an educational guide for all its members including pharmacists, interns and students. This guide is geared towards practitioners working in the community setting, but the guiding principles of infection control are common to most practitioners across most practice settings. A paper copy of the guidelines is inserted in your *Pharmacy Connection* package, while an online version is available at www.ocpinfo.com.

As a pharmacist you are accountable to provide safe and ethical care to the public. It is your responsibility to ensure that your infection control practices are up to date and meet your professional requirements, which include both the application of evidence-based measures and the use of professional judgement. The amount of literature available on

infection control and the media attention given to the spread of infectious diseases such as influenza can be overwhelming. *Infection Control for Regulated Professionals* has been developed as a resource and educational tool to help you achieve safe and effective infection control practices.

All pharmacists are obliged to report infectious disease under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990. *Infection Control for Regulated Professionals* includes definitions, references, and links to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) website that will enhance your infection control awareness, provide valuable knowledge and

help you to plan ahead for any health alerts that may arise. You will find regular updates on infection control on the MOHLTC website at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/ihn.html>. 

The Cleaning and Disinfection Checklist is included in this edition of *Pharmacy Connection*. It has been tailored to pharmacy practice and is intended to prompt you to think about your practices and revisit the present infection control program at your place of employment.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION CHECKLIST

Pharmacy Considerations	What to use	Recommendations
<p>Environmental Surfaces/General Housekeeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floors • Sinks (in the pharmacy and other) • Counter Tops • Storage Shelves and Bins • Cash Registers, telephones, computers • Washrooms (public and staff) • Private Counselling Rooms • Blood Pressure monitoring machines • Water filtration systems (for distilled water) • Refrigerator (pharmaceuticals only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning usually involves soap and water, detergents or enzymatic agents to physically remove soil, dust or foreign material. • Low level Disinfection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarternary Ammonium Compounds Iodophores 3% Hydrogen Peroxide Diluted Bleach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily and when visibly soiled • Clean high traffic areas more frequently i.e. where patients drop off and pick up prescriptions and near the cash register • Keep shelves and bins tidy and clean, dust free
<p>Equipment/Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfaces where drugs are prepared • A set of metric weights • Calibration weight • Distilled water • Graduate cylinders • Mortars & pestles • Stainless steel spatula • Non-metal spatula • Funnels • Stirring rods • Filter papers • Ointment pad • Ointment slab • Vials • Bottles • Ointment pots • Automated pill counters • Multidose vials • Multidose ingredients (used for compounding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation: a process that reduces microorganisms on an inanimate object to a safe level (e.g., dishes and eating utensils are sanitized)(9) • Cleaning usually involves soap and water, detergents or enzymatic agents to physically remove soil, dust or foreign material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following use or • Prior to use if suspected contamination • Pharmacists who decide to use a wall ADM (automated dispensing machine) must provide the same degree of attention as they would filling the cells as they would filling a vial manually (counting) or using a counter top ADM. Regular cleaning of the cells is also required, as it is for all pharmacy equipment • Care must be taken to ensure residues from the cleaning process itself (e.g., detergents, solvents, etc.) are also removed from equipment

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<p>Handwashing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper technique • No matter what agent you use, the essential components of a proper hand washing technique are to wet hands first, apply cleaner, and vigorously clean (rub) all aspects of your hands including the palms and backs of your hands, thumbs, fingers, nails and wrists for at minimum 10 seconds, rinse and then dry your hands properly. Try to turn off the tap with a paper towel after you dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain Soap • Antibacterial Soap • Hand Sanitizers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After handling money • Before and after routine compounding • Before and after preparing medications for dispensing • After handling waste or sharps containers • After handling equipment or items returned to you by patients e.g. returned glucometers, drugs for disposal etc. • After removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when used
<p>Use of Personal Protective Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloves • Surgical Masks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not routinely handle medications with your bare hands. • If you must handle pills to fill Dosettes or blister packs wear fresh clean gloves and dispose of them afterwards. • If you have a respiratory infection and must report to work, wear a surgical mask when preparing medications and in close contact (<1m) with patients. • Have available enough PPE to use if there is a Health Alert in effect for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A respiratory illness such as SARS or • Pandemic Influenza (Ontario Plan recommends 4 weeks worth of supplies)

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