

INFECTION CONTROL COMMITTEE  
ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL  
MALTA

**GLOVE USE POLICY  
FOR THE GOVERNMENT  
HEALTH SERVICES**

July 2002

Gloves have come to play a crucial role in most procedures carried out in hospital whether they are nursing, medical or domestic. It is however important to ensure that all health care workers have a clear understanding of which gloves are to be used in which circumstances and *which procedures do not require any use of gloves*. Wastage and mis-use is a common problem with glove practices world-wide. It should be appreciated by all, that financial resources in any setting - including hospitals - is not unlimited and therefore mis-use will only end up siphoning off money that could be used for other needs.

***Procedures when sterile gloves are recommended:***

1. Procedures which nullify the skin's innate defences - such as surgical operations
2. Invasive manipulations into sterile cavities (urinary bladder, blood, internal organs) - such as insertion of urinary catheters, central lines, lumbar puncture, etc.
3. Direct contact with non-intact skin, such as open non-infected wounds

Sterile gloves are needed when there is a possibility that the procedure undertaken carries a risk of an infection to the PATIENT.

***Procedures when non-sterile gloves are recommended:***

Non-sterile gloves are normally required when performing:

1. Procedures that can result in direct contact with potentially infected blood and body fluids - such as blood, faeces, urine etc.
2. Indirect contact with open wounds

Sterile gloves are needed when there is a possibility that the procedure undertaken carries a risk of an infection to the PATIENT.

***Procedures when gloves are usually unnecessary:***

1. Handling equipment which is not in direct contact with the patient - such as intravenous lines
2. Indirect contact with mucous membranes - such as mouth care performed with forceps, naso-gastric feeding etc.
3. Contact with intact skin - such as washing and turning patients unless incontinent
4. Environmental cleaning unless contaminated by spillages of blood or body fluids. Household gloves are usually recommended in such applications.

Gloves are NOT needed when there is NO appreciable possibility that the procedure undertaken carries a risk of an infection to the patient or the health care worker.

PROCEDURE	Gloves needed	Glove type
Ambulating patients	No	
Bathing: incontinent patients	Yes	Non-sterile
Bed cleaning: no visible soiling	No	
Bed cleaning: soiled with blood, urine or faeces	Yes	Non-sterile
Bed making	No	
Bed tables/lockers: cleaning	Yes	Household
Bedpan: emptying	Yes	Non-sterile
Bedpan: giving	No	
Blood Culture	Yes	Sterile
Chest physiotherapy	No	
Colostomy bag: changing	Yes	Non-sterile
Drains: removing	Yes	Non-sterile
Dressing change using forceps	No	
Emptying: urine bags	Yes	Non-sterile
Emptying: urine bottles	Yes	Non-sterile
Emptying: vomit bowls	Yes	Non-sterile
Enemas	Yes	Non-sterile
Feeding: Naso-gastric	No	
Feeding: Oral	No	
Food: serving	No	
Floor mopping	Yes	Household
Haem-glucotest testing	Yes	Non-sterile
Instrument cleaning	Yes	Household
IVI: care of line dressings	Yes	Non-sterile
IVI: changing bottles	No	
IVI: setting up	No	
Lumbar puncture	Yes	Sterile
Manual evacuation	Yes	Non-sterile
Mouth care with forceps	No	
Naso-gastric tubes - insertion & removal	Yes	Non-sterile
Observations: BP, Pulse, temp	No	
Per-rectum examination	Yes	Non-sterile
Position changing	No	
Pressure area care	No	
Redivac drain: emptying	Yes	Non-sterile
Refuse bin: emptying	Yes	Household
Room disinfection	Yes	Household
Shrouding	Yes	Non-sterile
Sluice room: cleaning	Yes	Household
Specimen taking: urine (using Vacutainer)	No	
Spillages: removal	Yes	Non-sterile
Suction through mouth, nostrils	Yes	Non-sterile
Suppositories: inserting	Yes	Non-sterile
Suture removal	No	
Suturing	Yes	Sterile
Toilet cleaning	Yes	Household
Treatment administration - I.M. injection	No	
Treatment administration - tablets	No	
Urinary catheters: inserting	Yes	Sterile
Urinary catheters: removing	Yes	Non-sterile
Urine testing	Yes	Non-sterile
Veinflow insertion	Yes	Non-sterile
Venepuncture	Yes	Non-sterile
Wound dressing: clean	Yes	Non-sterile
Wound dressing: infected	Yes	Non-sterile