

APPENDIX II – FACT SHEET (F)

**INFECTION CONTROL CRITERIA FOR PURCHASE OF
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) FOR
ROUTINE PRACTICES**



The employer has the responsibility to provide employees, clients and visitors with protection against infectious materials. They are specifically designed for use when there is contact with blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions, draining wounds, mucous membrane and non-intact skin.

Choosing products should be based on the following criteria:

- (a) availability
- (b) safety and reliability
- (c) uniformity
- (d) cost-effectiveness

Educational materials and in-servicing when appropriate for proper use of the purchased PPE should be considered mandatory for all personal protective equipment. The extent of the education materials and in-servicing required is dictated by the particular equipment selected.

GLOVES

Gloves are not needed for every client care activity. Purchase of gloves is a major expense for any care facility. It is important to consider reliability, supply and suitability for the task. The cheapest glove is not always the most economical. Conversely, the most expensive glove is not always the highest quality.

Health Canada (1998) outlines criteria that should be considered when purchasing gloves. Gloves must be:

- Disposable, single use
- Approved for medical use to protect against exposure of blood, body fluids any other contaminants
- Available in multiple sizes: small, medium and large. Sizing must be appropriate to provide adequate protection. An ill-fitted glove can be a hazard for the health care worker resulting in impaired dexterity and possible needle stick injury
- Good quality (have a leakage rate of < 5%)
- Appropriate for the intended use – non-sterile for routine practices and sterile for invasive procedures

- Available in dispensers that can be wall mounted for quick and easy access by health care workers, clients and visitors

Serious consideration should be given to the universal use of non-latex (vinyl or nitrile) and powder-free gloves to protect patients and staff against possible anaphylactic reactions to latex.

Separate purchase of sterile surgical gloves or re-useable general purpose gloves that are commonly used for cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces or for equipment cleaning (i.e. rubber gloves) should be considered.

Procedure gloves are meant to be an additional protective measure and are not a substitute for hand hygiene. Gloves need to be changed and hand hygiene practiced between clients, or when moving from one area on the body to another.

Gloves should be changed based on time and usage. They are used for a task with a client and then removed immediately to prevent transmission of disease-causing organisms. The risk of not only transmission but also contamination of surfaces within the environment exists with the improper use of gloves.

GOWNS

Disposable gowns may be preferable in a centre lacking laundry facilities, but cost may be prohibitive elsewhere.

The requirements for disposable or re-useable, washable gowns are similar.

Gowns used for routine client care must prevent contamination of uniforms and protect the skin of health care provid-



INFECTION CONTROL CRITERIA FOR PPE (CONTINUED)

ers from exposures to blood and body substances. Therefore, the gowns purchased must have the following features:

- Long sleeves with elasticized cuffs that fit snugly at the wrist
- Gowns must be long enough to cover front of clothing; multiple sizes
- Closures must be at the back to prevent accidental contamination if the gown falls open
- Closures at waist and neck
- If non-disposable, colour should differ from that of gowns used in the operating room for differentiation by laundry personnel
- Fluid resistant
- Re-useable gowns must be made of a fabric that can withstand washing at high temperatures

MASKS

Health Canada Guideline: *“Masks and eye protection should be worn where appropriate to protect the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth during procedures and client care activities likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.”*

Masks must be:

- Products recommended by provincial and/or regional health authorities
- Large enough to cover nose and mouth with visor where appropriate (and eyes where appropriate)
- Available in several sizes
- Clearly labelled for use: Large Droplet: procedure mask, “surgical”
- Packaged with instructions that match Routine Practices and Transmission Based Protection terminology; colour coding to aid with distinction of use
- Comfortable
- In a supply format easily accommodated on isolation carts
- Latex-free
- Fluid resistant (most inclusive product)
- Easy to use (i.e. loops vs strings)
- User friendly: allows easy access to product with minimal hand contact with packaging and other contents
- Disposable

A variety of products may be necessary to accommodate different clinical environments.

EYE PROTECTION AND FACE SHIELDS

Eye protection and face shields are used to protect the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth during procedures and client care activities likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions. Two types of product are generally available: goggles or eye shields which cover only the eyes and face shields which cover the entire face.

Eye/face protection must be:

- Comfortable
- Easy to use
- Durable during regular use
- Must fit over prescription glasses
- Compatible with masks used
- Without visual distortion
- Resistant to fogging
- Curved around the head to prevent side splashes
- Of sufficient length of shield that prevents splashing/spraying into the mouth (for face shields)
- Available in several sizes for good fit

In addition to the above, re-useable eye/face protection (Fine & Valenti, 2004) must:

- be easily maintained/disinfected
- be able to withstand the use of disinfectants without reducing visibility
- Have a clear protocol for cleaning and disinfection

Paediatric users must consider a product that doesn't “frighten” children such as goggles that are smaller while still being efficient, and having brightly coloured earpieces.

Different uses of the goggles/face shields must be considered. Several products may be necessary to meet the needs of all users – different departments such as dietary (the dish room where splashing is a problem), laundry, SPD, etc.