

Home Health Line Tool

Glove and hand hygiene guidance

Use this tool to remind clinicians of CMS' guidance to surveyors and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention's (CDC) guidance for health care workers on hand hygiene and glove use.

CMS' guidance to surveyors

G682 — §484.70(a) Standard: Prevention

The agency must follow accepted standards of practice, including the use of standard precautions, to prevent the transmission of infections and communicable diseases.

Interpretive guidance

Federal and state agencies such as the CDC and state departments of health, national professional organizations, have all developed infection prevention and control standards of practice. Examples of organizations that promulgate nationally recognized infection and communicable disease control guidelines, and/or recommendations include: the CDC, the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA).

An agency should identify the source of its infection prevention and control standards (CDC, state departments of health or other professional organization) and be capable of explaining why those standards were chosen for incorporation into the agency's program.

Standard precautions — those applying to all patients regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status — must be used to prevent transmission of infectious agents.

Hand hygiene is cited as one of six core practices identified by the CDC.

The survey guidance notes that agencies and surveyors are advised to review the CDC's current hand hygiene recommendations for correct procedures.

Hand Hygiene should be performed:

- Before and after contact with a patient.
- Before performing an aseptic task (e.g., insertion of IV, preparing an injection, performing wound care).
- After contact with blood, body fluids or contaminated surfaces.
- After contact with the patient's immediate environment.
- When moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site during patient care.
- After removal of personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, gown, facemask).

The term "hand hygiene" includes both handwashing with either plain or antiseptic-containing soap and water, and use of alcohol-based products (gels, rinses, foams) that do not require the use of water.

The agency must ensure that supplies necessary for adherence to hand hygiene are provided.

CDC's guidance for glove use

Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene

- If your task requires gloves, perform hand hygiene before donning gloves and touching the patient or the patient's surroundings.
- Always clean your hands after removing gloves.
- Remember to remove gloves carefully to prevent hand contamination as dirty gloves can soil hands.

When to wear gloves

- When needed for Standard Precautions (when you anticipate that you will come in contact with blood or other infectious materials, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, potentially contaminated skin, or contaminated equipment).
- When needed for transmission-based precautions.

When to change gloves and clean hands

- If gloves become damaged.
- If gloves become soiled with blood or body fluids after a task.

- If moving from work on a soiled body site to a clean body site on the same patient or if a clinical indication for hand hygiene occurs.
- If moving from care on one patient to another patient.
- If they look dirty or have blood or body fluids on them after completing a task.
- Before exiting a patient room.

CDC's guidance for hand sanitizer vs. hand washing

Unless hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizer is preferred over soap and water in most situations because it:

- Is more effective at killing germs on hands than soap.
- Is easier to use when providing care, especially when moving from soiled to clean activities on the same patient or when moving between care of patients in shared rooms.
- Results in improved skin condition with less irritation and dryness than soap and water.
- Improves hand hygiene adherence.