

	POLICIES & PROCEDURES Number: 20-60 Title: Linen
Authorization: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHR Infection Prevention & Control Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Facility Board of Directors	Source: Infection Prevention & Control Date Initiated: June 5, 2001 Date Reaffirmed: June, 2003 Date Revised: October, 2006 Scope: SHR Agencies & Affiliates

Introduction

Although contaminated textiles and fabrics in health care facilities can be a source of substantial numbers of pathogenic microorganisms, reports of health care-associated diseases linked to contaminated fabrics are so few in number that the overall risk of disease transmission during the laundry process likely is negligible. When the incidence of such events are evaluated in the context of the volume of items laundered in health care settings, existing control measures (e.g. standard precautions) are effective in reducing the risk of disease transmission to patients and staff.

Policy

Soiled linen should be handled the same for all patients regardless of their diagnosis or care setting or need for additional precautions.

Purpose

1. To prevent transmission of infection.

Procedure

1. Collection and handling
 - Handle linen with a minimum of agitation and shaking.
 - Sorting and rinsing of linen should not occur in patient care areas, except in facilities that use compartmented soiled linen bag carts into which different types of linen are sorted.
 - Heavily soiled linen should be rolled or folded to contain the heaviest soil in the center of the bundle. Large amounts of solid soil, feces or blood clots should be removed from linen with a gloved hand and toilet tissue and placed into a bed pan or toilet for flushing. Excrement should not be removed by spraying with water.
2. Bagging and containment
 - Soiled linen should be bagged at the site of collection.

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- To prevent contamination or soaking through, a single, leak proof bag or a single cloth bag can be used. The only indication for a second outer bag is to contain a leaking inner bag.
- Bags should be tied securely and not over-filled when transported.

3. Transport

- When a laundry chute is used, all linen should be bagged. The chute should discharge into the soiled linen collection area. Laundry chutes should be cleaned on a regular basis with a germicide solution.
- Separate carts should be used for dirty and clean linens. Carts used to transport soiled linens should be cleaned with a germicide after each use.
- Clean linen should be transported and stored in a manner that prevents its contamination and ensures its cleanliness.

4. Washing and drying

- If low temperature water is used for laundry cycles, chemicals suitable for low temperature washing at the appropriate concentration should be used.
- High temperature (>71.1°) are necessary if cold water detergents are not used.
- Use of a laundry detergent with bleach and a normal machine wash and dry are sufficient to clean soiled linen in areas with their own washer and dryer.

References:

1. Health Canada. *Hand Washing, Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization in Health Care*. CCDR 1998; 24S8: 34-36.
2. COC/HICPAC. *Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health Care Facilities*. 2003; 98-104.
3. See Pt. Care Equipment Policy