

Infection Control Policy

1. Policy and Procedure

My Help utilises the Infection Control Policy aims to reduce the risk of harm to workers, older people and visitors that may occur through the transmission of infectious substances or illnesses in the workplace.

Our processes are in line with the *Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare 2019* and depicts the appropriate measures and precautions to undertake when managing infection.

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It aims to promote the health, safety and welling of all persons.

This extends to all employees and meets relevant laws and regulations and standards.

2. Definitions

Infectious substances	Infectious substances are substances which. or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals. are known or are reasonably expected to contain. Indicative examples of substances that meet these criteria. pathogens.
Immunization screening	A blood test can check a person's immunity against certain diseases (such as chickenpox, measles, mumps, rubella and hepatitis B). This can help the doctor decide if immunisation is appropriate.
Transmission	A method of transmission is the movement or the transmission of pathogens from a reservoir to a susceptible host. Once a pathogen has exited the reservoir, it needs a mode of transmission to the host through a portal of entry. Transmission can be by direct or indirect contact or through airborne transmission.
Multi-resistant organisms	Multi-resistant organism (MROs), which are predominantly bacteria, are resistant to multiple classes of antimicrobial agents. Antimicrobial resistance increases the morbidity and mortality associated with infections and contributes to increased costs of care due to prolonged hospital stays and other factors, including the need for more expensive drugs. A major cause of antimicrobial resistance is the exposure of a high-density, high-acuity patient population in frequent contact with healthcare workers to extensive antimicrobial use, along with the attendant risk of cross-infection.
Antimicrobial stewardship	A coordinated program that ensures the optimal selection, dose, and duration of an antimicrobial therapy that leads to the best clinical outcome for the treatment or prevention of an infection while producing the fewest toxic effects and the lowest risk for subsequent resistance.

3. Policy

This Infection Control Policy is utilised in My Help to promote safety and good health for all persons. It sets out strict protocols that all persons must follow in aim to minimise incident of illness, disease or injury related to any forms of infection.

Droplet, airborne and blood borne pathogens are significant ways of virus transmission and contamination. Transmission of infections may also occur from using materials that are contaminated. This could include food, water, medicines, products, appliances or equipment. This is the reason why efficient infection control is crucial to delivering excellent assistance for older people and to create a safe working atmosphere and environment for all workers of My Help.

Limiting the spread of infection and disease allows our health care system to manage accordingly, rather than receive a large influx of incidents which causes stress and strain on the Australian Health Care System.

My Help recognises that workers and older people are most probable sources of contagious viruses and are the most common vulnerable host. Therefore, controlling infections is vital to supporting older people. My Help's Management has an obligation of responsibility and will follow all appropriate precautions to avoid infection transmission.

In order to assist with infection minimization and control, My Help ensures older people are active in decision making on their personal care and are properly informed so that they can assist in minimizing the risk of transmission. During this process, My Help ensures individual older people's rights are understood, implemented and respected.

My Help ensures to maintain connection and agreement with appropriately qualified and licensed organisations for safe and effective waste removal, pest control, qualified trades, medical supplies, pharmaceuticals, supply of PPE as well as household equipment.

All workers and Management are responsible for abiding by all Infection Control protocols in aims to minimise risks, hazards, illnesses and infections.

4. Procedure

My Help implements the Infection Control Procedure which provides all workers of My Help the appropriate training and induction to safety and adequately manage infectious substances and methods to minimise transmission.

My Help follows the protocols as set out by the Health Department and the Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare (2019). Aged Care Workers are required to complete the hand hygiene online learning modules as provided as part of the National Hand Hygiene Initiative.

My Help also follows the correct procedures when managing Notifiable Diseases. These are diseases which health care workers must disclose to the Health Department. Any worker or Management of My Help will be prohibited from undertaking work until their GP advises them that it is safe to do so. If any workers or Management present with symptoms of any infectious diseases or viruses, such as the common cold or flu, they must remove themselves from the workplace until they receive clearance.

The Clinical Advisor is directly responsible for the oversight, training, direction and management of any situations involving Infectious Substances. It is their responsibility to ensure workers are abiding by correct, appropriate and safe procedures when participating in Infection Control. The Clinical Advisor is required to provide My Help's CEO monthly reports on any situations regarding infection that have occurred. The Clinical Advisor will also encourage all appropriate vaccine requirements to be met before workers undertake practice within My Help. Failure to provide sufficient evidence of the required vaccines will result upon immediate leave to rectify the issue or will result in lack of employment opportunity for prospective workers.

My Help will closely follow the Risk Management Policy and Procedure in order to support Infection Control measures.

My Help's workers are required to abide by all Standard Precaution measures which will be explained and demonstrated in the initial new employee induction training. This will be reviewed at least annually by the Clinical Advisor. Standard Precaution measures include donning PPE, correct waste management, and correct etiquette such as coughing or sneezing into a tissue and correct hand hygiene practice. Standard precautions also refer to appropriate management of contaminated sharps, clinical waste, soiled PPE or linen. These Standard Precaution methods must be utilised when any worker may come into contact with the following:

- Mucous Membranes
- Wet or Dried Blood
- Non-Intact Skin
- All body substances such as excretions and secretions.

My Help promotes individual older people encouragement for undertaking infection control measures. This is completed by following the following steps:

1. My Help must take individual older people feedback into consideration when implementing policies and services.
2. My Help will inform older people about My Help's methods of infection control and advise older people to report their health or risk condition where there is a possible source of infection.
3. My Help will advise older people about the protocols for safeguarding their privacy and confidentiality.
4. My Help offers older people with opportunities to recognise and discuss risks which allows older people to use feedback through the services feedback, complaints and compliment procedures.
5. My Help will provide educational content using a range of flyers, posters and informative videos on prevention and control of infections.

My Help's workers will also be trained in recognising various infections and their pathway for transmission. Workers will be competent in understanding the below:

Droplet Pathogens	This is small droplets that can be transmitted via fluid. This includes Rubella, Influenza, SARS and Mumps.
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Airborne Pathogens	This is small particles transited in the air. This includes Chickenpox or Tuberculosis etc.
Contact Pathogens	This is direct contract from one surface to another, usually transmitted via skin-to-skin contact. This included infections such as Scabies or Gastroenteritis.

My Help's workers are also trained in routine cleaning methods in aims to kill bacteria, infections and limit the spread of these particles. This includes:

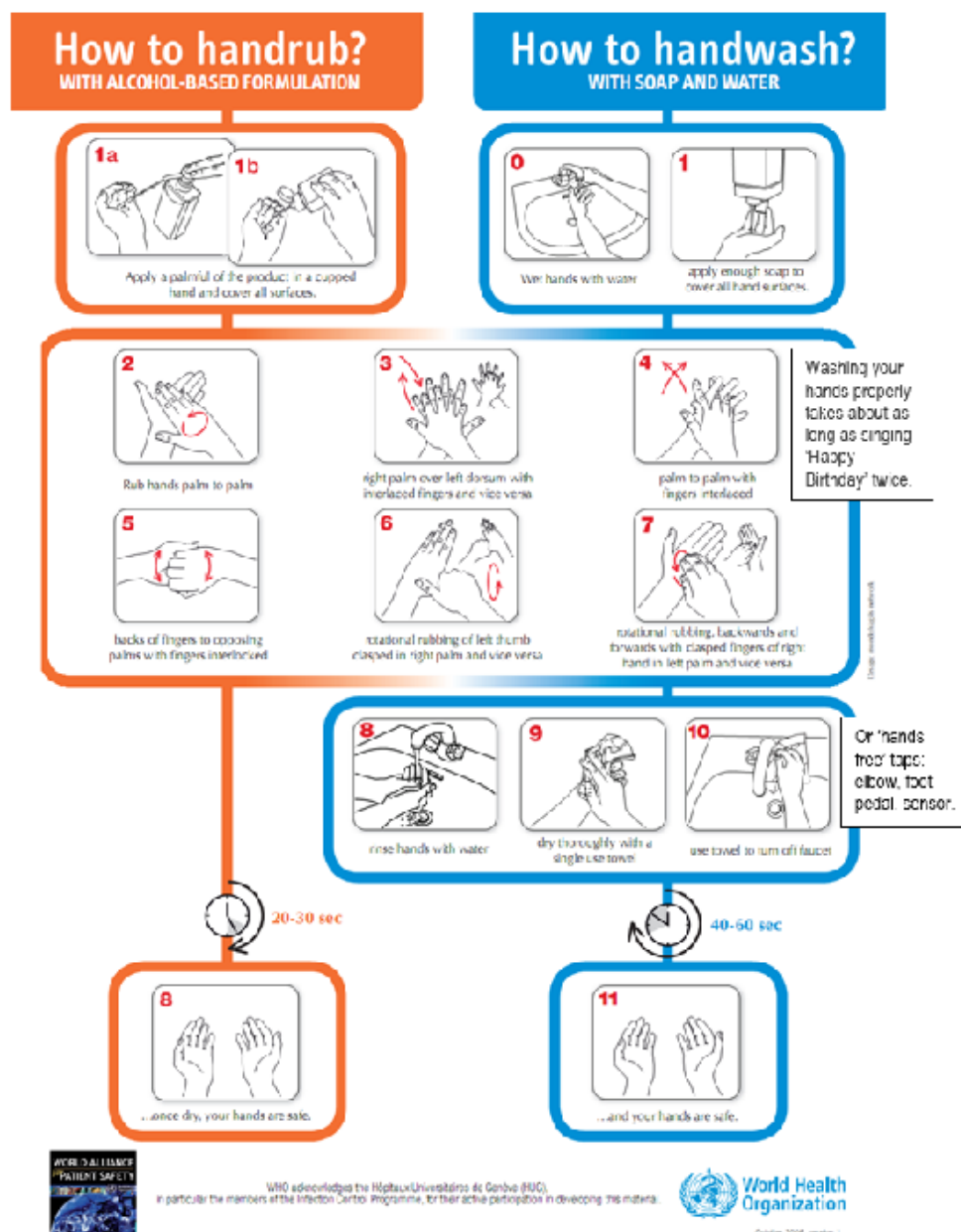
- Surfaces should be cleaned and have disinfectant applied, before and after they are used and when they are noticeably dirty.
- Flooring should be cleaned every day or as required with a vacuum cleaner or with a mop.
- All leaks and spills should be immediately dealt with.
- All wet zones must be cleaned daily.

To ensure a safe environment and avoid contaminated environments, My Help should implement a cleaning and maintenance schedule which includes the following:

- Minimize dispersal of microorganisms into the air
- Avoid creation of aerosols
- Use detergent and warm water for routine cleaning
- Use surface disinfection if required and in accordance with manufacturer's instructions
- Wash buckets and mops with detergent and dry before storing.

Hand Hygiene must be conducted in accordance with the set-out Hand Hygiene Protocol which is in line with the National Hand Hygiene initiative and provided in hardcopy to all workers. Hand Hygiene should be conducted in the following situations; however, this is not limited to:

- Before and after consuming food
- After using bathroom facilities
- After coming into contact with any surface, environment, object or person that may be contaminated or infected.
- After coming into contact with any blood, body fluids or non-intact skin.
- Before and after donning PPE.
- Before and after providing direct contact care.
- Before and after break times.
- After smoking.
- Whenever hands are visibly soiled.



Workers are required to undergo health and immunization screening before beginning works for My Help.

All care Aged Care Workers (care Aged Care Workers refers to care Aged Care Workers providing direct care to older people) are required to provide evidence of the following vaccinations/immunizations:

- Hepatitis B
- Hepatitis A
- Varicella
- Tuberculosis
- Influenza
- Pertussis
- Adult Diphtheria and Tetanus
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella.

Maintenance or cleaning Aged Care Workers (refers to persons not coming into contact with older people):

- Influenza
- Hepatitis A

Workers of My Help may be required to undertake Specimen Collection if ordered by an authorised health care professional such as a GP, RN, specialist etc. Workers will be required to adhere to all precautionary principles such as PPE and appropriate hand hygiene. Specimens can only be collected by workers who are trained in the correct and procedures and protocols when completing this task. Workers must follow all collection instructions required by the health care professional. Once completing the collection, specimens must be placed in a clear plastic bag marked with the biohazard symbol, this is usually provided. It must then be taken to the pathology centre by the appropriate person.

All sub-contractor workers must abide by My Help's Infection Control Policies and Procedures as well as their professional practice requirements at all times.

5. Antimicrobial stewardship

My Help will work with medical professionals experienced in the detection of endemic and emerging pathogens, monitoring transmission of microorganisms, planning and conducting epidemiologic investigations.

Where a individual older people is prescribed the uses of antimicrobials, RNs or appropriately qualified ENs will monitor dose, duration and clinical outcomes so as to minimise adverse consequences and report any adverse findings to prescribing medical professionals. Communication with the individual older people's GP must be maintained weekly throughout the duration of therapy.

Procedures include:

- educating healthcare Aged Care Workers on antimicrobial resistance, recognition of infection (especially severe infection and sepsis the nature of colonisation), and that not all infections require treatment with antimicrobials;
- implementing tracking and reporting on antimicrobial use and resistance within our individual older people base;
- providing Clinical Governance via the Clinical Advisor who is accountable for promoting and overseeing antimicrobial stewardship activities. They will also share relevant data with other clinicians in order to maintain awareness and provide feedback to prescribing physicians;
- ensuring only RNs are responsible for the safe and correct administration of antimicrobial medications and monitoring the effectiveness of this treatment;
- including stewardship-related expectations in position descriptions for management and clinical Aged Care Workers;
- implementing this Infection Control policies that support the minimisation of infection, particularly in those using antimicrobials;
- ensuring receipt of full medical records, including infection risk/status and management plan, where care is transferred from another health care provider (e.g. hospital or ambulance

service).

My Help will establish appropriate links with individuals and organisations with antibiotic expertise to implement antibiotic stewardship activities. These include:

- seeking support from infection disease consultants and consultant pharmacists with training in antibiotic stewardship;
- participating in relevant education programs at local hospitals;
- maintaining access to a current list of notifiable infectious disease and points of contact within Victoria.

6. Risk Based Workforce Immunisation Program

To further prevent the spread of infection, My Help will have an influenza vaccination program that:

- provides Aged Care Workers and volunteers of the service with access to a free influenza vaccination on an annual basis, either directly provided on site or indirectly (for example making arrangements for Aged Care Workers to be able to access a vaccine at a local pharmacy);
- actively promotes the benefits of an annual vaccination for their Aged Care Workers and volunteers, and for the health outcomes of older people; and
- keeps records of the number of Aged Care Workers that receive an influenza vaccination each year.

Our vaccination program will also be extended and adapted to COVID-19 vaccinations as guidelines continue to develop.

7. Supporting Documents

Relevant documents relating to this Policy and Procedure:

- Workplace Health, Safety and Security Policy
- Lifestyle, Independence and Wellness Policy and Procedure
- Waste Management Policy and Procedure
- Risk Management Policy and Procedure
- Hand Hygiene Protocol
- Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure