

Management of Care Equipment

There are many items of equipment within the care home that require regular cleaning and maintenance to prevent and control the risk of infection. Care equipment can generally be categorised as either:

- Single use equipment such as dressing packs or syringes
- Single patient use items such as an oxygen mask
- OR, multi use equipment, which are non-invasive such as mattresses, bed frames, wheelchairs and walking frames

Single use equipment should not be reused and should be discarded appropriately after use.

Infection can be spread via items that have not been cleaned properly. Cleaning and maintaining equipment is essential to prevent vulnerable and susceptible people acquiring infection.

It's likely that your care home will have a cleaning plan – a schedule of what equipment is to be cleaned when and using which cleaning materials. Keeping care equipment clean, fit for purpose and well maintained is everyone's responsibility to prevent and control the spread of infection.

Some items of care equipment, such as hoist slings, are designated for use by a named individual and should not be used for any other person. Cleaning of these items should adhere to the manufacturers' guidelines.

Commodes are often used in the care home environment and are an example of multi-use equipment. This must be cleaned thoroughly between use and between users.

The contents of the pot is disposed of by emptying into the en-suite or into the facilities within the sluice if no en-suite is available and they must be thoroughly cleaned after each use – remember to clean the under seat of the commode, the arms, and the top. The pots can be washed in a washer/disinfector. Pots from the commodes must not be washed in individuals' rooms and not soaked in solutions in a bath or sink.

Depending on the individual needs of the people you care for, you need to be familiar with some clinical equipment and how this needs to be cared for and cleaned.

Emptying a catheter bag

A catheter drainage bag should be kept below bladder level and emptied before it becomes completely full to avoid back flow into the bladder. It should not be emptied more often than necessary because this increases the risk of infection.

The following procedure must be followed when emptying the catheter bag:

- Wash your hands and put on gloves and disposable apron
- Empty the bag into a clean container by releasing the drainage tap
- The container should be disposable or, if reusable, cleaned as per local policy
- Empty into a toilet, note the volume if required
- Remove gloves and apron
- Wash hands and record the volume if required

How to change a catheter bag?

The following procedure must be followed when changing a catheter bag:

- Remove the new bag and tubing from packaging, the drainage bag connection to the catheter must be kept sterile therefore it should not be touched. Assemble leg strap
- Detach used bag holding the catheter to prevent backflow into the bladder
- Do not pull or drag the catheter
- Ensure the catheter is effectively secured
- Remove cap and attach new bag making sure not to touch the end of the tube, otherwise micro-organisms can be introduced causing infection
- Place used bag into appropriate waste bag
- Remove gloves and apron and place in the appropriate waste bag.
- Wash hands
- Record catheter bag change and urine volume

Nebulisers

Residents with breathing difficulties may use a nebuliser:

- If needed provide help to put the mask in place
- Masks can be used again but only for single person use and should not be shared

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- After use detach the mask and clean following manufacturer's instructions
- Keep the machine clean and dust free check tubing before and after use

If you want to find out more information about the cleaning and maintenance of a range of care equipment please visit the relevant section of the CD.

To break the chain of infection:

Remember

- You should be aware of the items that are single use and should be discarded and those that are multi-use and can be cleaned
 - Cleaning and maintaining equipment is the responsibility of all staff
 - You should have a good understanding of cleaning procedures and schedules
 - Always read and follow manufacturer's guidelines
 - Always wear appropriate PPE
- Wash your hands or use alcohol based hand rub after every task.