



INFECTION PREVENTION POLICY

OCTOBER 2022



OVERVIEW

The purpose of this policy is to minimise as far as possible risks of harm to ICAS workers (including employees, volunteers and contractors) and visitors which may arise through passing infections between each other. Infections and infection transmission will be prevented and managed as far as possible through the application of standard precaution practices.

SCOPE

The Infection Prevention Policy applies to all ICAS workers.

PRINCIPLES

To assist ICAS to minimise the risk of infection transmission, the following principles will be considered:

- Effective infection control is central to providing high quality support for participants and a safe working environment for ICAS workers and visitors.
- Workers and participants are most likely sources of infectious agents and are also the most common susceptible hosts. Other people visiting the premises may be at risk of both infection and transmission.
- The main modes for transmission of infectious agents are contact (including blood borne), droplet and airborne. Transmission of infection may also occur through sources such as contaminated food, water, medications, devices or equipment.
- Infection control is integral to participant support, not an additional set of practices.
- Participants' rights are always respected; they are involved in decision-making about their support, and they are sufficiently informed to be able to participate in reducing the risk of transmission of infectious agents.

PROCEDURE

Effective infection control is central to providing high quality services to participants and a safe working environment for ICAS workers and any others who may come into the workplace.

ICAS will manage the risk to participants and workers contracting an infectious and/or preventable disease by identifying infection risks related to the organisation and implementing precautions that are proportionate to those risks.

As a registered NDIS Provider, ICAS complies with:

- The NDIS Guidelines and Practice Standards
- Relevant State, Territory and Federal Government requirements

VACCINATIONS

Whilst most vaccinations are not a mandatory requirement, it is recommended that medical advice be sought about appropriate vaccination measures for the following preventable diseases:

- Influenza
- Hepatitis B
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR)
- Varicella (Chicken Pox)
- Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (DTP – commonly known as the 'whooping cough' injection).
- COVID-19



INFECTION PREVENTION

Stopping the spread of infection is everyone's responsibility and includes:

- Practicing good hand hygiene
- Following respiratory hygiene / cough etiquette
- Wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where required
- Correctly handling medical utensils
- Correctly cleaning work environments

HAND HYGIENE

Hand hygiene is the single most important strategy in preventing healthcare associated infections. Hand hygiene must be performed:

- Before touching a participant
- After exposure to bodily fluids or substances
- After touching a participant
- After the removal of gloves

Hand hygiene may be performed by using soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser. Soap and water should always be used if the hands are visibly soiled. If using an alcohol-based hand sanitiser special precautions must be taken.

These include:

- Alcohol-based hand rub must contain between 60% and 80% v/v ethanol or equivalent
- A diagram demonstrating the correct procedure for using alcohol-based hand rub
- Alcohol-based hand rub must be stored, and used, away from heat and naked flames
- No tasks should be attempted until hands are completely dry

Workers that have cuts, sores or abrasions on their hands must exercise extra caution by covering with a waterproof dressing and wearing gloves where required.

The use of gloves is not an alternative to hand hygiene.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Workers must always adhere to standard personal hygiene practices whilst working for ICAS.

Standard personal hygiene requirements include but are not limited to:

- Keeping hair clean
- Wearing minimal or no jewellery
- Wear clean clothing
- Practicing regular and proper hand washing techniques
- Keeping fingernails short and clean

RESPIRATORY HYGIENE / COUGH ETIQUETTE

Covering sneezes and coughs reduces the chance of infected people dispersing droplets into the air where they can spread to others.

Practicing good respiratory hygiene means:

- Covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough, sneeze, wipe or blow your nose
- If no tissues are available, cough or sneeze into your elbow rather than your hand



- Encouraging participants to use tissues when they sneeze or cough
- Providing the means for prompt disposal of used tissues in general waste
- If required, encourage the use of masks
- Encouraging participants and others in the workplace to practice hand hygiene

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Workers must have access to PPE as well as any other resources necessary to maintain safe working practices.

Gloves

Gloves must be worn:

- For procedures with a risk of exposure to blood or bodily fluids e.g., assisting a participant with toileting or applying basic first aid
- When touching equipment or surfaces that may encounter blood or bodily fluids
- When performing personal care procedures
- When performing blood glucose monitoring
- When caring for participants who have an infection spread by contact
- If the worker has broken skin, cuts or abrasions on their hand which may pose a risk to others.
- When preparing food

Remember:

- Gloves are not to be used in replacement of hand hygiene.
- Remove gloves when a care activity is finished, change gloves before starting a new care activity
- Dispose of used gloves immediately after use in a manner appropriate to the work environment

Gowns and Aprons

Gowns or aprons are used to stop contamination of workers' clothes and skin such as when there is a risk of splashes or sprays of blood or bodily fluids.

When using gowns or aprons:

- Perform hand hygiene before and after using them
- Remove and dispose of gowns or aprons as soon as task is completed in a manner appropriate to the work environment and waste management process

Gowns or aprons can be used:

- When clothes may be exposed to blood or bodily fluids but it is low risk that arms will be contaminated.
- When the worker's clothes might get wet
- Only once



Face Masks

The use of face masks may be required as per the direction of National or State Government. Face masks protect the workers nose and mouth from sharing infectious agents and are used if there is a risk of:

- A spreading of airborne contaminants
- Droplets or aerosols
- Splashes or sprays of blood and bodily fluids

When using face masks:

- Check the manufacturer's instructions before use
- Do not touch the front of the mask with your hands once the mask is in place
- Use the mask for the care of one participant only
- When the activity is complete, discard mask and perform hand hygiene

Protective Eyewear

Protective eyewear protects a worker's eyes from exposure to infectious agents and is always recommended when there is a risk of:

- Droplets or aerosols
- Splashes or sprays of blood or body fluids

When using protective eyewear:

- Remember that the outside of the eyewear is contaminated
- When care is complete, remove eyewear using the headband or earpieces
- Clean eye shield after each use with detergent and water and allow to dry
- If eyewear is single use, dispose of after completion of activity

INCIDENTS AND SPILLS

Managing Spills

Prompt clean-up of spills (e.g. vomit or diarrhoea) helps to stop infectious agents spreading from the environment to people. When managing spills:

- Select the appropriate PPE such as gloves depending on the size of the spill
- Immediately wipe up spots and spills smaller and cover larger spills with absorbent material
- Dispose of contaminated cleaning materials
- Clean with detergent solution and consider following with disinfectant for infectious or larger spills
- Clean with detergent solution and consider following with disinfectant for infectious or larger spills
- Always perform hand hygiene



Exposure to Blood or Bodily Fluids

If, during the provision of supports and services to participants, a worker comes in contact with blood or bodily fluids, the following steps are to be taken:

- Flush the area with running water
- Wash the area with soap and water
- Report the incident to your Manager
- Record the incident as per the Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Seek medical advice where applicable

If any clothes are contaminated, rinse the item under running water, soak in a bleach solution, then wash separately from other clothing or linen with hot water and detergent.

Needle Stick Injury

During work duties, workers may come into contact with needles or devices used for injections such as EPI Pens or insulin syringes or pens. Accidents can happen and needle stick injuries can occur.

Where this happens, the following process is to be observed:

- Immediately wash the affected area with soap and water
- If the skin is penetrated, wash the area with soap and water; apply a mild antiseptic, then cover the wound with a band aid or dressing
- Report the incident to your direct Manager
- Record the incident as per the Incident Management Policy and Procedure
- Seek medical advice

Sharps Disposal

- All used sharps must be placed in a clearly labelled, puncture resistant container that complies with Australian Standard AS 4031 or AS/NZS 4261 immediately after the procedure is completed
- Sharps containers must not be filled beyond three quarters full
- Sharps containers must be disposed of by a waste disposal contractor according to respective State, Territory Government Regulations

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste Disposal will be as per the State or Territory Legislation and Regulations. Where there are no specific State or Territory requirements in place the following guidance applies:

- Clinical waste such as used swabs which do not contain expressible blood can be treated as general waste
- Used swabs must be:
 - Discarded into a leak-proof plastic bag
 - Kept out of reach of children



- Disposed of as general waste

CLEANING

Cleaning is an important part of stopping the spread of infection and depends on the objects involved and risk of contamination.

ICAS will ensure that all equipment is cleaned thoroughly and where possible use disposable towel and paper to limit the spread of infection.

When cleaning:

- Most surfaces can be adequately cleaned with warm water and detergent and an anti-bacterial multipurpose spray
- Allow cleaned surfaces to dry completely
- A detergent solution followed by disinfectant may be appropriate when an infection is known or suspected on surfaces of equipment

HANDLING LINEN

To avoid spreading infectious agents from used linen:

- Wear appropriate PPE when handling linen of participants who have an infection and or are ill
- Place linen soiled with blood or urine or other body fluids into a leak-proof laundry bag/s. Do not carry soiled linen
- Do not sort or rinse used linen in areas used to provide support to participants
- Wash all linen using a good quality (if not anti-bacterial) laundry detergent and set the washing machine to use the highest possible hot water setting
- Where possible, dry linen in a clothes dryer using the 'hot' setting
- Perform hand hygiene after handling linen
- Store clean linen in a clean dry place, separate from used linen

FOOD HANDLING AND PREPARATION

Safe food handling is important to prevent food-borne illness.

When handling food:

- Perform hand hygiene before putting on gloves and handling food
- Perform hand hygiene after using the toilet, coughing, sneezing, blowing nose, touching face, nose, ears or mouth, handling rubbish or after cleaning
- Avoid unnecessary contact with ready to eat foods
- Tie back long hair
- Do not sneeze, blow, cough over unprotected food or surfaces likely to encounter food
- Do not eat over unprotected surfaces likely to encounter food



- Do not touch food after touching body parts (hair, nose, ear, eye), skin lesions, saliva, mucus, sweat, blood or money without first performing hand hygiene

When preparing food:

- Keep hot food hot (above 60°C) and cold food cold (below 8°C)
- Use separate storage, utensils and preparation surfaces for cooked and uncooked foods
- Wash all utensils and preparation surfaces thoroughly with hot water and detergent after use or place in the dishwasher and run the dishwasher cycle

TRANSPORTING PARTICIPANTS

When transporting participants, care is required to reduce the risk of spreading infection. When transporting participants:

- Perform hand hygiene before and after transport
- If a participant has a respiratory illness, encourage them to wear a mask and to perform respiratory hygiene / cough etiquette

VIRUS PANDEMIC

ICAS will closely monitor outbreaks of potential pandemics and be prepared to take immediate steps to protect the health of its participants and workers. ICAS will follow the instructions of both the World Health Organisation and Australian Federal Government throughout the pandemic. Where ICAS either directly or indirectly has contact with individuals diagnosed with the virus during the pandemic, they will:

- Contact the applicable Public Health Unit (such as, Queensland Health) for further advice and direction.
- Communicate regularly with their participants and workers to keep them informed of any possible impacts this may have on the provision of supports.
- Perform ongoing risk assessments on the risks involved in managing infectious / preventable diseases and outbreaks.
- Develop and implement a plan that specifically addresses business continuity, risk management to ensure continuity of supports and services where the workforce may be reduced and resources limited.

TRAINING

Workers will be provided with training in accordance with the level of involvement with infection control processes.