

Infection Control Practices for Sacramental Ministry – Appendix 413A



Infection Control Practices for Sacramental Ministry

For your safety and the safety of the patient you are serving in the hospital, it is critical that you learn and practice habits that limit or stop the spread of microorganisms (“germs”). The principles of hygienic practices that are used in Canadian hospitals to stop Transmission (spread) of microorganisms are called *Routine Practices* and *Additional Precautions*.

Recognize that every person (child or adult) has the potential to carry microorganisms that can cause infections. In a hospital setting patients are at an especially high risk to become infected with these germs. Even germs that have no effect on you have the potential to cause severe illness or even death to a patient. These germs are spread not only on the hands of care givers but on the “equipment” that they bring in and out of patient rooms.

Routine Practices:

1. Hand Hygiene

- Waterless hand-cleaning stations containing an alcohol-based hand sanitizer are located throughout the hospital. Use frequently, especially before entering a patient’s room and after visiting a patient.
- If your hands are visibly soiled, use soap and water to clean instead of the hand sanitizer.

2. Cleaning Equipment

Any object that does not have a smooth wipeable surface (e.g. books, folders, cloth items etc.) or cannot be adequately cleaned must not be taken into the patient’s room unless it is to remain with the patient (e.g. a Bible for the patient).

- Disposable prayer cards for anointing should be used for sick calls. Please make photocopies, or contact Josée Marr at the Pastoral Centre to provide these for you.
- If you need to set any item down while in the room, place it on a clean, dry paper towel from the dispenser. Ensure that it is not touched by patients and that you clean your hands before touching the patient.
- Infectious agents can be transferred from the patient or a surface in the patient’s room via hands/fingers. To ensure that you do not contaminate the holy oil during anointing, **clean your hands before starting**. Then use a **different finger each time** you access the vial. It is essential that you not “double dip.”

Additional Precautions

A patient, who is on ‘infection control isolation’, will have signage on the outside of their room that indicates what mandatory precautions must be taken. *Before entering the room*, please ask for assistance from unit nursing staff and/or the on-call chaplain. They will gladly assist you in adhering to necessary guidelines.



- If the patient to whom you have been asked to see is on “Contact” (green), “Significant Organism” (pink) or “Contact and Droplet combined” (orange and green (Stollery only)) isolation, be aware that anything you take into the room must be left in the room,
 - Only disposable prayer cards for anointing should be used.
 - Do not take the Holy Oil Stock or the Pyx into the room.
 - Holy Oil: Either dip your finger in the holy oil before entering the room or place a small amount in a “med cup” (obtained from the nurse). Ensure you use all of the oil and then dispose of the med cup in the sharps container (will be burned).
 - Blessed Sacrament: First ensure the patient can receive the host. Then, place the host in your hand and bring it to the patient careful to ensure that all of the host is consumed.
 - If, by mistake, the Oil Stock or Pyx enter the room, please clean and disinfect them, leave the patient’s room and follow the above procedure before entering the patient’s room again.

Holy oils are available in the back area of the Spiritual Care office (1H1.26; open 8:00 am to 4:00 pm). It is recommended that you have your own supply of oils. If you do not and need access to those in the office, please inform the chaplain who is contacting you