







Infection prevention and control is crucial in pharmacies to protect both staff and customers. Here are some key tips for implementing effective IPC measures:

	<h2>Hand hygiene</h2> <p>Hand hygiene is the most important way to reduce the transmission of infection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands frequently: Use liquid soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing, using tissues, or contact with potentially contaminated surfaces. • Use alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR): When hands are not visibly soiled, use an ABHR with a minimum of 60% isopropyl alcohol, • Ensure easily accessible handwashing facilities with liquid soap, paper towels, and foot-operated waste bins.
	<h2>Respiratory hygiene</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use disposable tissues to cover the nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, disposing of them immediately in a waste bin. • Encourage customers with respiratory symptoms to wear masks: This applies especially to those attending for urgent treatment. • Regularly clean areas where coughing/sneezing may occur: Focus on frequently touched surfaces, such as work counters, cash tills etc.
	<h2>Personal protective equipment (PPE)</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use disposable gloves and aprons during tasks that involve potential exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, non-intact skin, or mucous membranes. • Wear fluid-repellent masks and eye protection (goggles or visors) where there is a risk of splashing of blood or body fluids. • Change PPE between patients and tasks: Remove and dispose of PPE appropriately after each patient contact or task and perform hand hygiene before and after. • Keep PPE close to the point of use in a clean, dry, and covered container or dispenser.
	<h2>4. Cleaning the environment</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a clean and tidy environment: Minimise clutter and regularly clean all surfaces, especially those in consultation rooms and near patient testing areas. • Use appropriate cleaning agents: Regular detergent is sufficient for routine cleaning. For cleaning blood and body fluid spills, follow specific protocols outlined in your pharmacy's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). • Ensure proper cleaning protocols for equipment: Adhere to manufacturer instructions and local policies for cleaning reusable equipment like BP monitors/cuff, stethoscopes, and near-patient testing devices.

	Waste management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Segregate waste appropriately: Utilise the correct bins for different types of waste (general, clinical, sharps, etc.). • Dispose of sharps safely: Immediately place used sharps (needles, syringes, lancets) into designated, puncture-resistant sharps containers. • Never overfill sharps containers: Follow manufacturer guidelines and seal containers properly before disposal. • Ensure secure storage and collection of waste: Store all waste in a designated, secure area awaiting collection and adhere to waste disposal regulations.
	Staff health and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide IPC training for all staff: This should include hand hygiene techniques, use of PPE, waste management, and sharps injury procedures. • Offer Hepatitis B vaccination, especially to staff involved in finger prick testing and vaccination procedures. • Encourage staff to report injuries or concerns: Establish clear procedures for reporting sharps injuries or potential infection risks. • Promote a culture of safety: Foster an environment where staff feel comfortable raising concerns and adhering to IPC measures.

These tips are general guidelines, and it's essential to consult and adhere to your local infection control guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the most up-to-date and specific recommendations for your pharmacy setting.

The NHS England regional IPC team are available for guidance and advice as well as offering site visits to support you and your staff.

We are looking for pharmacies to volunteer to trial our proposed IPC assurance audit if you wish to be involved in this then please contact us:

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