

<b>Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital Policy and Procedure</b>		
<b>Standard Precautions, Respiratory Hygiene, and Hand Hygiene</b>		
Effective: August 2021	Revised: August 2023	Due to Review: August 2025

## **POLICY**

To prevent the transmission of infectious disease at the Vermont Psychiatric Care Hospital (VPCH), the following infection control measures are to be implemented at the first point of contact with hospitalized persons. They should be incorporated into infection control practices as components of Standard Precautions.

## **PROCEDURE**

Standard precautions are the minimum infection control practices that apply to the care of hospitalized persons, regardless of suspected or confirmed infectious agents. Standard precautions are designed to protect both staff and hospitalized persons from the spread of infections. Standard precautions include, but are not limited to:

- Hand hygiene
- Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (gloves, masks, eyewear)
- Respiratory hygiene/ cough etiquette
- Injection Safety
- Environmental cleaning and disinfection

Standard Precautions assume that all moist body fluids are potentially infectious. Standard precautions apply to all moist substances from the body including:

- Blood
- Any body fluid, secretion, or excretion (except sweat), regardless of whether it contains visible blood
- Non-intact skin
- Mucous membranes

Hand Hygiene is the single most effective means of preventing the spread of nosocomial infections among hospitalized persons and personnel. The three methods of Hand Hygiene at VPCH (alcohol-based hand rub, benzalkonium chloride hand rub, and soap/water) are delineated below:

- Alcohol-Based Hand Rub
  - Perform hand hygiene using an alcohol-based hand rub using the following method:
  - Dispense enough hand rub to cover all surfaces of the hands (front, backs,

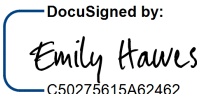
- between fingers)
  - Rub both hands together until they feel dry
  - If hands are dry in less than 15 seconds, apply more hand rub and repeat
- Benzalkonium chloride-based hand rub (located in the on-unit dispensers)
  - Approved for use on behavioral health units where the use of alcohol-based products can pose a safety hazard to hospitalized persons
  - Perform hand hygiene using a benzalkonium chloride-based hand rub using the following method:
  - Dispense enough hand rub to cover all surfaces of the hands (front, backs, between fingers)
  - Rub both hands together until they feel dry
  - If hands are dry in less than 15 seconds, apply more hand rub and repeat
- Hand washing with soap and water
  - The only approved method for hand hygiene after caring for a hospitalized person with *C. difficile*
  - How to wash hands with soap and water
    - Wet hands with water
    - Apply enough soap to cover all hand surfaces
    - Rub hands together and scrub everywhere; rub hands together for at least 20 seconds
    - Wash the front and back of your hands, in between your fingers, and under your nails
    - Rinse hands with water
    - Dry hands completely using a single-use towel or air dry
    - Turn the tap off using a paper towel
- Hand Hygiene must be performed:
  - Before contact with a hospitalized person
  - After contact with hospitalized person
  - Before donning gloves
  - After removing gloves
  - Before performing a clean or aseptic procedure
  - After contact with objects in the care area (ex. medical equipment, bedside table, linens, etc.)
  - Between care activities when moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site.
  - Immediately and thoroughly when the hands are accidentally contaminated with blood or other potentially infectious materials using soap and water
  - After using toilet facilities.
  - Prior to and after food handling.

Respiratory Hygiene/ Cough Etiquette includes the implementation of strategies to contain the respiratory secretions of any VPCCH employee, visitor, or hospitalized individual including:

- Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing
- Disposal of tissues in the nearest waste receptacle after use
- Performing hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions or potentially contaminated objects
- Individuals with cough or symptoms of respiratory illness will be provided with a medical mask for use as source control.
- The availability of the following materials to support Respiratory Hygiene practices including:
  - Provision of tissues and no touch receptacles for tissue disposal
  - Availability of alcohol-based hand rub or
  - Supplies for handwashing (soap, disposable towels) where sinks are available
  - Medical masks
- Presence of visual postings at the entrance of the facility to instruct everyone entering the building of symptoms of respiratory infection and how to practice Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette.

**References (if applicable):**

- [CDC’s Core Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Safe Healthcare Delivery in All Settings | Infection Control | CDC](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Transmission Based Precautions](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Isolation Precautions](#)

Approved by	Signature	Date
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