
MEMORANDUM

Date: 10 October 2014

To: All Immunization Providers

From: Regional Immunization Committee

Re: The role of gloves and alcohol-based hand rub use when vaccinating

Dear Colleagues,

The purpose of this bulletin is to outline and clarify the role of gloves and alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) use when vaccinating.

Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) – routine use

ABHR is the preferred method for routine hand hygiene in VCH immunization settings if hands are not visibly soiled. Hands should be washed with soap and water when visibly dirty or visibly soiled with blood or other body fluids or after using the toilet. There may be misconceptions that ABHR can only be used a certain number of times before it becomes ineffective or hands need to be washed. This is not the case and there is no reason to wash hands after using ABHR multiple times, other than for personal preference or hands become soiled.

Glove Use – not routinely recommended

Glove use during immunization is not routinely recommended, unless the vaccinators has open hand lesions or will come into contact with potentially infectious body fluids. Further to this:

- Gloves are **not required** for routine patient care activities in which contact is limited to a patient's intact skin. This is the case for the vast majority of immunizations being provided.
- The use of gloves is not a substitute for performing hand hygiene, but an additional measure in appropriate instances.
- If gloves are used, **they must be changed** between each patient contact.
- Hand hygiene must be performed before and after using gloves, as the provider's hands may have been contaminated through glove defects or during removal.

Unnecessary use of gloves may provide a false sense of security, leading to decreased hand washing. Additionally, inappropriate use of gloves (i.e. not changing them between patients, not washing hands between use) leads to the transmission of infectious agents between patients.

References

BCCDC Immunization Manual Chapter 2, [Section IV](#) – Administration of Biological Products October 2008 Page 7

Canadian Immunization Guide: [Vaccine Administration](#)

Public Health Agency of Canada: [Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for Prevention the Transmission of Infection in Health Care](#)

World Health Organization: [Alcohol Based Handrub Risks/Hazards](http://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/faqs/abhr2/en/index.html) <http://www.who.int/gpsc/tools/faqs/abhr2/en/index.html>