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Policy Area Infection Prevention
Applicability UNC Medical Center

Cleaning And Disinfection of Non-Critical Items

I. Description

This policy is to provide UNC Hospitals staff guidance with the cleaning and disinfection of non-critical reusable patient care equipment, reusable patient care items and environmental surfaces.

II. Rationale

An effective infection prevention and control policy is necessary to mitigate transmission of disease from direct or indirect contact with contaminated surfaces, patient equipment, or patient care items.

III. Policy

A. Spaulding Classification Scheme

The Spaulding classification scheme is a rational approach to disinfection and sterilization of reusable patient care equipment and/or devices. Based on the degree of risk of infection involved in the use of items, the scheme divides reusable patient care items into three distinct categories: 1) critical; 2) semi-critical; 3) non-critical.

Critical Items: require sterilization	Enter/contact normally sterile tissue or the vascular system. Examples include but not limited to surgical instruments, certain catheters, implants, laparoscopes, arthroscopes.
Semi-critical Items: require at least high-level disinfection	Contact intact mucous membranes or non-intact skin. Examples include but not limited to some endoscopes, endocavitary probes, diaphragm fitting rings, laryngeal blades.
Non-critical Items: require	Contact intact skin but not mucous membranes. Examples

low-level disinfection	include but not limited to bed pans, blood pressure cuffs, and stethoscopes.
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1. For sterilization of critical items, refer to Infection Prevention policy: [Sterilization of Reusable Patient Care Items](#)
2. For High Level Disinfection of Semi-Critical items, refer to Infection Prevention policy: [High Level Disinfection \(HLD\) – Manual reprocessing of reusable semi-critical medical devices](#)

B. Low Level Disinfection of non-critical reusable patient equipment, reusable patient care items and environmental surfaces.

1. Disinfectants

- a. An EPA-registered disinfectant, for example Super Sani-Cloth[®], Metriguard[™], per manufacturer's instructions for use (MIFU) should be used for cleaning surfaces, reusable patient equipment, and reusable patient care items per MIFU. Follow the MIFU for the indicated contact/dwell time for each cleaning product.
- b. In cases of suspected or confirmed diarrheal illness, items should be disinfected with a sporicidal disinfectant such as Sani-Cloth[®] bleach wipes per MIFU.
- c. If MIFU do not provide cleaning and disinfection instructions, contact Infection Prevention for assistance.

2. Reusable non-critical patient care equipment or patient care items must be disinfected following the MIFU.

- a. Follow MIFU for frequency of disinfection of non-critical patient care equipment or patient care items.
- b. If MIFU do not specify a frequency of disinfection, all patient care equipment should be disinfected when visibly soiled, after use on a contact precautions or enteric contact precautions patient and on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly, etc.).

NOTE: Single use disposable patient care items may not be disinfected for reuse. Refer to Infection Prevention Policy: [Reuse of Single Use Devices](#).

C. Responsibilities

1. Department Directors, Managers and/or designees

- Ensures surfaces, reusable patient care equipment and reusable patient care

items are cleaned and disinfected according to the manufacturer's instructions for use.

2. Infection Prevention Department

- Consults on the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, reusable patient equipment and reusable patient care items. Conducts rounding to assess compliance. Escalates concerns as needed and collaborates with unit or clinic leadership to ensure safe patient care.

IV. References

CDC guideline for disinfection and sterilization in health-care facilities; Rutala WA, Weber DJ, and Healthcare Infection Control Advisory Committee (HICPAC). 2008

V. Responsible for Content

Infection Prevention Department

VI. Related Policies

[Infection Prevention Policy: High-Level Disinfection \(HLD\) - Manual Reprocessing of Reusable Semi-Critical Medical Devices](#)

[Infection Prevention Policy: Reuse of Single Use Devices](#)

[Infection Prevention Policy: Sterilization of Reusable Patient Care Items](#)

Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Policy Stat Administrator	Kimberly Novak-Jones: Nurse Educator	02/2024
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	Emily Vavalle: Dir Epidemiology	02/2024
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Applicability

UNC Medical Center

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