

Isolation Precaution: Frequently Asked Questions

Should disposable food trays be used for patients on isolation?

No, disposable food trays are not needed. A dietary tray is brought into the patient's room by unit staff wearing appropriate PPE.

Removing a tray from an isolation room should be done by two persons. The first staff member brings the food cart to the room door and opens the cart door. The second caregiver in PPE enters the room, obtains the tray, and places the used tray directly into the food cart. The cart containing used trays is taken directly to the kitchen area and appropriate cleaning and disinfection is done to dishes, tray and the transport cart. Do not place used dishes/trays from an isolation room into a biohazard bag. The items will be destroyed if placed in a biohazard bag.

How do I pass medications to a patient on Contact Isolation Precautions?

Medications are administered utilizing barcode-assisted medication administration (BCMA), whenever possible. A bar code scanner may be placed into a plastic bag and taken to patient to scan the armband. Do not scan an armband not attached to the patient. The scanner should be removed from the plastic bag at the room door and cleaned with a disinfectant wipe.

How do I take equipment into and out of an isolation room?

Use disposable or dedicated patient care equipment (e.g., blood pressure cuff, thermometer, stethoscope) when possible. When multi-use equipment cannot be dedicated to isolation patients, wipe down all contact surfaces with a hospital-approved disinfectant or disinfectant wipes after each use. Some equipment may be placed in disposable plastic cover bags for use with the isolation patient and cleaned per aforementioned instructions between patients. Do not place used equipment from an isolation room into a biohazard bag. The items will be destroyed if placed in a biohazard bag.

How do I take supplies into and out of an isolation room?

Supplies:

- 1) Take only enough supplies needed to complete a specific task into an isolation room. Do not take excess supplies into the room (e.g., excess blood products, disposable medical supplies).
- 2) Discard all disposable medical supplies present in the patient room at the time of discharge.

How do I administer blood products to a patient on isolation?

Used blood products that need to be returned to the Blood Bank are bagged in a biohazard bag prior to return to the Blood Bank. Blood products are not to enter the isolation room until time of use is indicated.

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How do I obtain a lab specimen when a patient is on isolation?

Don PPE. Obtain and label the specimen. Call for assistance and stand at the door. Another healthcare worker holds open a biohazard bag at the doorway. The garbed person inside the room, drops the specimen into the biohazard bag and the helper seals the bag. Taping the lab on door leaves residual adhesive that cannot be easily cleaned. By working with a peer, labs can be sent on for processing and not delayed until the nurse finished the care and doffs PPE.

How do I administer a multidose medication when it cannot be secured in an isolation room?

- **Glucometer check:** Don PPE and enter the room with the glucometer. Perform the glucose check. Ask a peer to hand the insulin to you with a syringe(s) if it is needed.
- **Double Check of the medication:** With a nurse at the door, verify the “rights” of medication administration in the doorway allowing the second nurse to verify.
- **Multidose Medications:** Don PPE, enter the room with the medication. Scan the medication and administer. Hand the multidose medication out to a peer to be wiped down with alcohol wipes.
- **Controlled Substances:** Don PPE. Administer medication. Call for assistance and stand at door. Another healthcare worker holds open a biohazard bag at the doorway. Drop the specimen into the biohazard bag and the helper seals the bag. Doff PPE and exit room. Don clean gloves and waste medication appropriately. Doff gloves and perform hand hygiene.

What precautions should sitters take with isolation patients?

When inside the patient’s room, sitters should wear all appropriate PPE for the patient’s infection. If the patient is positive for a respiratory illness such as COVID-19 or influenza, non-essential staff will not be in the room for AGPs; sitters will be considered non-essential since the provider will be directly managing these activities.

If an isolation patient meets the criteria for a virtual sitter, this would be preferred.

Trash cans should be stored outside the room, ensuring you have enough room to properly doff PPE. Belongings should be “dropped” inside a plastic bag with someone holding the bag. The bag needs to be clearly marked and can be kept in your usual location outside of the room.

How do I obtain signed paper documents from an isolation room?

Obtain document, a “single use” pen and ask another staff member to remain on standby with an envelope. Don PPE and discuss documents with patient. Ask patient to perform hand hygiene. Give the patient the single use pen and have them sign the paper with as little contact as possible. Leave the pen inside the room. At the doorway, the person in PPE drops the paper into the envelope held open by the other staff member. The envelope can either be delivered to medical records or scanned by the unit for usual processing.

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How do I clean items from isolation rooms?


When cleaning items from an isolation room, be sure to keep the soiled/isolated items segregated from any clean items. This can be accomplished by utilizing Clean and Dirty Areas (outlined below).

While this process can be useful, be mindful of high traffic areas and limit standing “dirty” items/spaces.


Always clean items in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, using appropriate VUMC disinfectant products for that item.


- **Clean Area:**
 - Designate a “clean” area that will be used only to place clean items to dry after being cleaned
- **Dirty Area:**
 - An area near the “clean” area may used as a “dirty” space to place dirty items (such as eye protection, glucometer, etc.) while doffing PPE. Once PPE is doffed, items should be cleaned immediately with an appropriate disinfectant and then moved to the “clean” space to allow for disinfectant to dry
 - If a non-porous surface is used, the surface should be wiped after each encounter with an approved disinfectant
 - An absorbent pad may also be used and then discarded after each use
 - If an absorbent pad is not labeled “clean,” it should be assumed “dirty” and discarded


 When cleaning equipment, **check the manufacturer’s instructions** to ensure one of these products can be used.

 Use cleaning products according to the label instructions; follow **“kill time.”**

Use on:

 most hard surfaces.

 dialysis equipment, PCA pumps, and to kill *C. diff.* and norovirus.

 computers, WOWs, and keyboards.
