

FECAVA Key Recommendations for Hygiene and Infection Control in Veterinary Practice



SUPPORTED BY



PREVENT INFECTION

Effective implementation of hygienic measures is essential to prevent and contain the transmission of nosocomial infections to animals and humans both within veterinary settings and in the community.

CLEAN & DISINFECT HANDS

The most important activity in the control of nosocomial infections in practice.

WASH HANDS

- At the start & end of the working day.
- After visiting the toilet.
- Before & after eating or smoking.
- When visibly soiled.
- After handling animal fluids & excretions.
- Before aseptic or invasive procedures in combination with disinfection.

DISINFECT HANDS

(use alcohol-based hand sanitizers 70-90%)

- That are dry & clean.
- Before & after handling each patient.
- Before & after gloving.
- Before touching equipment, door handles & keyboards.

No jewelry (rings, bracelets), wristwatches, nail polish or fake nails should be worn. Nails should be kept short and clean.



USE GLOVES

- When handling diseased or carrier animals of known or suspected contagious disease, including parasitic infestations.
- When handling animals with known or suspected antimicrobial resistant infections.
- When handling all wounds.
- When contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions and mucous membranes is possible.
- During surgery or when asepsis is required (sterile gloves).
- Change gloves between each individual patient & when visibly contaminated.
- Change gloves when moving from dirty to clean procedures on the same patient.
- Change gloves before touching equipment, door handles & keyboards.

Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand hygiene!



TRAIN STAFF

Train & encourage all staff to understand & comply with good hygiene practices. Correct hygiene is not difficult if everyone is aware of its importance.

- Develop written hygiene protocols (display prominently) & appoint a member of staff with responsibility for promoting & enforcing hygiene practices.
- Establish thorough in-house training of staff & encourage attendance at continuing education courses on hygiene.



MANAGE WASTE

Divide clinical waste according to risks to animal and human health. Always use a United Nations approved waste container, carrier or treatment facility.

- **Sharps** – rigid container, no free liquids.
- **Infectious waste** - bags (yellow) for soft contaminated items, gloves, gowns, bandages, swabs & tissues.
- **Hazardous (cytotoxic)** – (purple) lidded rigid container.
- **Animal cadavers & animal by-products** – place in plastic bags to avoid leakage of liquid. Store in a cold room or freezer.
- **Domestic waste** (non-risk waste) – e.g. clean recyclables. Follow local legislation for removal.



CLEAN & DISINFECT PREMISES

Use approved cleaning products & disinfectants for veterinary premises & follow label instructions. Use gloves. For equipment, follow the recommendations from the manufacturers.

SURFACES & EQUIPMENT

- Clean & disinfect before & after each patient & when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Clean & disinfect door handles, keyboards, light switches & telephones on a daily / regular basis.

COMMON AREAS (ENTRANCES, RECEPTION, WAITING ROOMS & CORRIDORS)

- Clean & disinfect daily & when visibly soiled or contaminated.

WARDS, ISOLATION & INTENSIVE CARE UNITS

- Clean & disinfect before & after each patient & when visibly soiled or contaminated.



WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

To ensure that hands & forearms can be kept clean short-sleeved lab coats or scrubs should be worn at all times when handling patients. Protective clothing should not be worn outside the working environment.

ADDITIONAL PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Masks, hair caps, sterile gowns & gloves should be used for surgical & invasive procedures.

Plastic aprons, gloves & masks are required when handling:

- Patients with known or suspected contagious disease.
- Potentially contaminated fluids & secretions.

Change the additional protective clothing:

- Between patients.
- When moving between wards, isolation & intensive care units.



EDUCATE PET OWNERS

- To ensure good hygiene practices during clinical visits & following contact with their animal in their homes.
- To support veterinary efforts in improving hygiene & responsible use of antimicrobials with good adherence to prescribed therapies.
- To convey better understanding of the public health implications of zoonotic & antimicrobial resistant infections in pets.



LAUNDER CLOTHING & BEDDING

- Scrubs & lab coats – daily & when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Bedding & animal blankets – between each patient & when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Remove any gross visible soiling contamination prior to washing (use gloves).
- Wash at 60°C & dry at high temperature to eliminate infectious organisms.
- Maintain clear separation between dirty & clean areas in laundry room to avoid cross-contamination.

