

**Germs can be spread directly by physical contact, such as when shaking hands, or indirectly, when someone touches an item someone else may have touched such as equipment, telephones or other objects: this is called contact transmission.**



# Visiting with Contact Precautions

**C**ontact precautions help stop the spread of germs from one person to another by direct or indirect contact.

**A** sign may be placed on the door to let staff and visitors know of necessary precautions. When visiting, first read the sign on the door or curtain and discuss any necessary precautions to follow with the nursing staff. Depending on the illness and type of visit, it may be necessary for visitors to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) as indicated on the precaution sign.

**S**taff provide care for different residents throughout the day and must take extra precautions to make sure they do not carry germs from one resident to another. They will wear gloves and may wear long-sleeved gowns when they have contact with a resident or objects in their room.

**S**ome diseases have a time limited period of communicability during which visitors are likely susceptible to infection. These include:

- Gastrointestinal illness (GI)
- Influenza-type illness
- Clostridium difficile (C. difficile)
- Norovirus
- Rotavirus

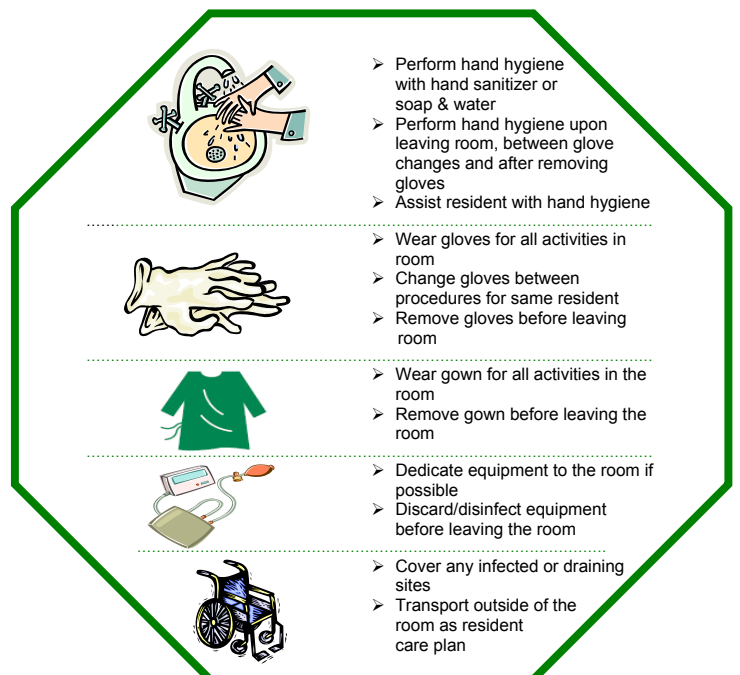
**D**uring an outbreak, residents may be required to stay in their room during the duration of their illness. Please check with nursing staff before taking a resident out of their room.




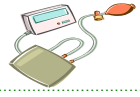

**I**f a resident was placed on contact precautions because of an antibiotic resistant organism (ARO), the chance of spreading the germ to visitors is small, as long as good hand hygiene is performed. AROs that are sometimes seen in nursing homes are:

- Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA),
- Vancomycin-resistant Enterococci (VRE),
- Extended Spectrum Beta Lactamase (ESBL)

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## CONTACT PRECAUTIONS



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Perform hand hygiene with hand sanitizer or soap &amp; water</li> <li>➢ Perform hand hygiene upon leaving room, between glove changes and after removing gloves</li> <li>➢ Assist resident with hand hygiene</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Wear gloves for all activities in room</li> <li>➢ Change gloves between procedures for same resident</li> <li>➢ Remove gloves before leaving room</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Wear gown for all activities in the room</li> <li>➢ Remove gown before leaving the room</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Dedicate equipment to the room if possible</li> <li>➢ Discard/disinfect equipment before leaving the room</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Cover any infected or draining sites</li> <li>➢ Transport outside of the room as resident care plan</li> </ul>

## Guidelines for visiting a resident with AROs:

- Place your coats/belongings just inside the room. Do not place personal items on the bed, bedside table or counter by the sink.
- Try to limit visitors to two at any one time. Adult visitors must be responsible for and supervise any children visiting.
- Limit what you handle in the room. If another resident needs help, call a nurse.
- Do not remove anything from the room without speaking to the nurse first - including meal trays.
- Do not use common areas (TV lounges, kitchen area or nutrition carts). Ask staff for help.
- Do not use resident washroom facilities, choose public washroom facilities.
- Visit a resident on contact precautions after any other residents you may want to visit.
- Clean your hands well with soap and water or a hand sanitizer:
  - Before and after you visit a resident as well as after contact.
  - After going to the bathroom.
  - Before eating.
  - After sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose.
  - When hands are visibly soiled.

## When to wear a gown and gloves

**V**isitors will only need to wear a gown and gloves when providing direct care to residents who have an antibiotic resistant organism (ARO).

**H**elping at meal time and pushing a wheelchair are not considered direct care.

**D**irect care examples are:

- assisting with bathing,
- assisting someone to go to the bathroom,
- changing personal hygiene (incontinent) products
- caring for wounds.

**B**efore leaving a resident's room, visitors must remove the gloves and gown and dispose of them in a garbage/linen container located in the resident's room.

**V**isitors are not to assist other residents with their personal care as this may cause the germ to spread.

## Guidelines for taking a resident with AROs home for a visit:

- Clean clothes in the same manner as the rest of the household laundry.
- Use common household disinfectants and routine cleaning for your home. Special cleaning of furniture or items (e.g., dishes) is not required.
- Always tell your physician, paramedics, nurses or other care providers that you have a germ requiring contact precautions to help prevent its spread to others.

**A**lcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs.

**S**oap and water are more effective than hand sanitizers at removing or inactivating certain kinds of germs, like *Cryptosporidium*, *Norovirus* and *C. difficile*.

**O**utbreaks of GI illness are a good example of when you should use soap and water to clean your hands.

**B**asic rule of thumb...when caring for someone experiencing diarrhea and/or vomiting, wash hands with soap and water.