



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Infection control guidelines

for the prevention of transmission of
infectious diseases in the health care setting

Endorsed by the Communicable Diseases Network Australia,
the National Public Health Partnership and the Australian Health
Ministers' Advisory Council

January 2004



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An electronic version of this document may be accessed from the Department of Health and Ageing website at:

<http://www.icg.health.gov.au>

This document is also included in Paradigm's annotated index of healthcare epidemiology and infection control literature at:

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How to use this document

IMPORTANT NOTE

Part 1 of this document (Principles of Infection Control) provides recommendations that form the foundation for all work practices and procedures detailed in the remainder of the document. Reading and applying these principles is the key to understanding the issues that affect infection control. Please read Part 1 first, then the table of contents where all the information is listed in a logical sequence.

These guidelines should be considered in association with the State or Territory legislative requirements that affect work practices of the health care establishment and/or health care worker. If the recommendations in this document conflict with State or Territory guidelines, the statutory requirements of the State or Territory should take precedence.

IMPORTANT



This document outlines the principles involved in, and the procedures necessary for, the prevention of transmission of infectious diseases in the health care setting, hereafter in this document referred to as ***infection control*** or ***infection control procedures***.

Successful infection control is based on good hygiene around a range of practices that arise from identifying hazards and implementing risk management for the hazards.

This involves understanding:

- the infectious agents;
- the work practices that prevent the transmission of infection in different settings; and
- management systems that support effective work practices.

To address these issues, this document has been prepared in five main parts.

Part 1 (Principles of infection control) provides the foundation for all work practices and procedures detailed in the remainder of the document. Reading and applying these principles is the key to understanding the issues involved.

Parts 2 to 5 may be read in their entirety or used as a ready reference to obtain specific information about the many different aspects of an effective infection control program. For example, to find information on a specific disease, refer to **Part 4** (Managing infectious diseases in the health care setting).

An additional part, Part 6, includes appendixes and other endmatter and can be consulted as required.

Part 1	Principles of infection control	This part introduces the concepts necessary for an effective infection control strategy and outlines the basic principles that are applied throughout the remainder of the guidelines.
Part 2	Quality management	This part describes administrative arrangements for effective infection control and quality management. The ethical and legal considerations that affect quality management are also discussed.
Part 3	Effective work practices and procedures	This part is about personal and environmental hygiene, support services, equipment and instruments, including reprocessing, surveillance, HCW protection, blood and blood products and transplants.
Part 4	Managing infectious diseases in the health care setting	This part identifies the major risk factors and recommends management procedures for patients, HCWs, instruments and the health care environment. A short description is also included of the viral, bacterial and other infectious diseases, and antibiotic-resistant bacteria, that are important in the health care setting.
Part 5	Infection control in specific health care settings	This part identifies the major risk factors and management procedures for specialised health care settings. These include operating rooms, office practice including dental practice, midwifery and obstetrics, home and community, and residential aged care.
Part 6	Appendixes and endmatter	This part includes appendixes providing additional useful information about infection control, information on the production of these guidelines, useful contact addresses and further detailed information about Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. The endmatter includes a glossary, list of abbreviations and acronyms, reference list and index.

There is an overall table of contents for the guidelines following this section. Each part of the document also has its own contents page, which provides a detailed breakdown of all the sections, subsections, tables and figures in that part of the guidelines. A subject index is also included at the end of the guidelines for easy reference to particular subject areas.

Many sections of the document refer to Australian Standards (AS) or Australian and New Zealand Standards (AS/NZS). A full list of all the standards referred to in this document is given in Appendix 3. Other publications cited in the ICG are listed in the References section.

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Preface

The intention of this document — *Infection Control Guidelines for the Prevention of Transmission of Infectious Diseases in the Health Care Setting* (ICG) — is to provide national best practice guidelines for infection control procedures in Australian health care settings. The scope of ICG is broad and applies to a wide range of health care establishments, including hospitals, office practices (medical and dental), long-term residential care establishments, community nursing, emergency and first aid services. This document is also intended to be used as a resource to guide or implement infection control policy for health care establishments and individual health care workers (HCWs).

These guidelines have been prepared under the auspices of the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA). CDNA is a subcommittee of the National Public Health Partnership (NPHP), which is a subcommittee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC). CDNA comprises public health experts drawn from Commonwealth, State and Territory public health departments and agencies. The guidelines have also been endorsed by the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council.

The aim of CDNA has been to:

- develop infection control guidelines that are substantiated by advice from experts and evidence from published scientific and medical literature;
- provide accurate and up-to-date technical information or 'best practice guidelines' for infection control management; and
- address ethical issues pertaining to infection control where a national approach is appropriate.

CDNA recognises that the information needs to be reviewed continuously because of technical developments, new instrumentation, regulatory changes and microbial evolution. Regular updates will be made to this document in the light of these developments. Amendments to the text will be posted on the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing website:

<http://www.icg.health.gov.au>

An Infection Control Guidelines Steering Committee (ICGSC) was formed to oversee the project and to provide expert medical and scientific advice. The ICGSC was supported by a project team drawn from the Communicable Diseases Branch of the Department of Health and Ageing. The department's project team provided scientific advice, and administrative and secretariat support.

Recognised experts and organisations drafted various sections of the document to reflect current scientific evidence and best practice. The draft was posted on the department's website in July 2000 and public comment invited. All submissions were considered by ICGSC, and in August 2001 further public comment was sought on the revised draft. The draft was further amended by the ICGSC in the light of the public consultation, before consideration and endorsement by the CDNA. The NPHP and AHMAC subsequently endorsed the guidelines.

Special thanks and acknowledgment to the Infection Control Guidelines Steering Committee (honorary) members for their generous donation of time, their technical advice and cheerful cooperation, which contributed to the success of the project.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the Infection Control Guidelines Steering Committee were as follows.

1. Review the documents:

- A *Infection Control in the Health Care Setting: Guidelines for the Prevention of Transmission of Infectious Diseases* (NHMRC/ANCA 1996)
- B. *Creutzfeldt–Jakob Disease and Other Human Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies: Guidelines on Patient Management and Infection Control* (NHMRC 1995); and

Provide a revised document on infection control in health care settings, by March 2000, to the Communicable Diseases Network Australia (CDNA; formerly the Communicable Diseases Network Australia New Zealand) for endorsement.

2. As part of the review process:

- consult with key stakeholders;
- consider the available scientific evidence and current best practice methods, both in Australia and internationally, that may impact on the ICG revision; and
- take legal advice about current and emerging trends, both ethical and practical, influencing infection control practice in the health care setting.

3. Incorporate appropriate recommendations based on current scientific, medical and legal advice into a revised document for publication and distribution to health care providers.

4. Advise the CDNA on mechanisms for the ongoing:

- review of infection control issues;
- implementation of the guidelines into infection control practice;
- evaluation of the guidelines; and
- incorporation of new or emerging issues into future revisions of ICG.

5. Report progress of the review to the CDNA, through the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), at least once every six months during the current revision process.

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The officers listed above were involved in the review and production of these guidelines over a period of some years.