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KNOWLEDGE FLASH

Infection Risks Related to Gloves

Improper glove use and unnoticed glove tears can potentially cause significant infection risk to both patients and healthcare workers (HCWs).[1,2]

The following have a significant impact on pathogen exposure for patients and healthcare workers:

HAND HYGIENE

GLOVE CHOICE FOR TASK

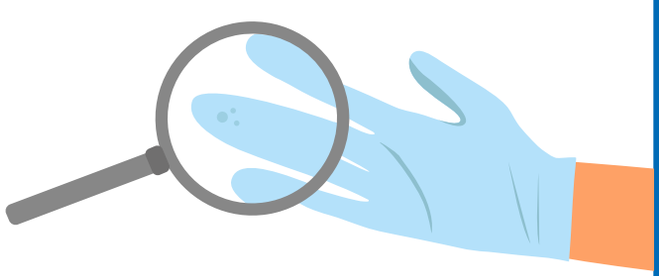
GLOVE INTEGRITY

Impact of improper glove use:

- Lack of proper hand hygiene before and after glove use increases likelihood of the transmission of organisms.[1]
- Improper use of nonsterile gloves includes wearing gloves when not recommended, not changing gloves as needed, donning gloves too early during care or doffing gloves too late.[2]
- Cross-contamination occurs when gloves are not changed between patients, or used to touch a clean surface after being contaminated.[1]
- Contaminated gloves used to perform clean or aseptic procedures increases the risk of exposure to infectious pathogens for both patients and HCWs.[1]
- Can lead to unexpected exposure to blood or body fluid during patient care activities.[1]
- Can be seen across all medical disciplines, including medical, nursing, and dental providers.[2]

Impact of glove integrity issues:

- Risk of surgical site infection (SSI) increases if sterile glove is perforated or torn.[3]
- If glove perforations or tears go unnoticed, it can potentially expose both the HCW and patient to infectious material.[3]
- These perforations or tears can allow for microorganisms on the HWCs hand to pass through and contaminate the surgical site.[3]



References:

1. Lindberg M, Skytt B, Lindberg M. Continued wearing of gloves: a risk behaviour in patient care. Infect Prev Pract. 2020;2(4):100091. Published 2020 Sep 17.
2. Hardie J. Gloves spread disease and have created an infection control dilemma. Oral Health. Published 2018 Nov 22. https://www.oralhealthgroup.com/features/gloves-spread-disease-and-have-created-an-infection-control-dilemma/. Accessed December 8, 2023.
3. Tlili MA, Belgacem A, Sridi H, et. al. Evaluation of surgical glove integrity and factors associated with glove defect. Am J Infect Control. 2018;46(1):30-33.

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