


Welcome to this edition of the NHS newsletter, focusing on the safe management of care equipment. This issue highlights the critical differences between single-use and reusable syringes for oral/enteral use, as well as PPE use. Learn best practices, safety guidelines, and how to make informed decisions to protect patient health while ensuring compliance with NHS standards.

SAFE MANAGEMENT OF CARE EQUIPMENT - SINGLE USE VS RE-USABLE (FOR ORAL/ENTERAL USE) SYRINGES

What is Single-use? Equipment used once on a single patient AND then discarded. This equipment must never be re-used. The packaging will carry the following symbol: 

What is Single patient use? Equipment that can be reused on the same patient and may require decontamination between uses (for example, reusable syringes and nebuliser masks).

What is Reusable invasive equipment? Used once then decontaminated, eg surgical instruments.

What is Reusable non-invasive equipment? (often referred to as communal equipment) – Reused on more than one patient following decontamination between each use, eg commode, hoist.

Needles and syringes are single-use devices, they should never be used more than once or reused to draw up additional medication. Never administer medications from a single-dose vial or intravenous (IV) bag to multiple patients.

Before using any Single-use sterile equipment check that:

- The packaging is intact
- The packaging is not contaminated
- The expiry date remains valid



'SINGLE PATIENT USE' SYRINGES (FOR ORAL/ENTERAL USE)



- Items marked 'Single patient use' can be reprocessed for a specific patient.
- Staff members must follow the manufacturer's advice around cleaning and storing the reusable syringes.
- Re-usable syringes are 'single patient use' and should not be shared between patients.
- After appropriate cleaning, re-usable syringes should be stored separately in a clean, dry container with a lid. Clearly add resident's name and DOB to the container).
- Patients or carers who need to administer oral liquid medicines with a syringe must be supplied with approved oral or enteral syringes.
- Manufacturers' instructions and guidance on the frequency of changing extension sets must be followed. Extension sets may be washed and reused for up to 14 days (if in line with manufacturer guidelines). In order to track this, staff should document the opening date in their electronic system.
- Syringes, giving sets and extension sets should not be re-used if marked 'single' use only.

Personal Protective equipment (PPE)

What is PPE ?

Personal protective equipment (PPE) refers to items of clothing or equipment that protect healthcare workers from the from the risk of injury or infection.

When is PPE Used?

All staff, patients and visitors should use PPE when there will be contact with blood, bodily fluids or respiratory secretions.

PPE products you might need in the care home:

- Gloves
- Aprons
- Masks
- Eye protection

Before undertaking any procedure, staff should assess any likely exposure to blood and/or body fluids, non-intact skin or mucous membranes and wear personal protective equipment (PPE) that protects adequately against the risks associated with the procedure.

Best practice: putting on and removing PPE

• Perform hand hygiene before putting on PPE

- 1 Apron**
Pull over head and fasten at back of waist.
- 2 Gown/Fluid repellent coverall**
Fully cover torso neck to knees, arms to end wrist and wrap around the back. Fasten at the back.
- 3 Surgical mask (or respirator)**
Secure ties or elastic bands at middle of head and neck. Fit flexible band to nose bridge. Fit snug to face and below chin. Fit check respirator if being worn.
- 4 Eye Protection (Goggles/Face Shield)**
Place over face and eyes and adjust to fit.
- 5 Gloves**
Select according to hand size. Extend to cover wrist.

2. Removing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 6**
Outside of gloves are contaminated. Grasp the outside of the glove with the opposite gloved hand, peel off.
- 7**
Hold the removed glove in the gloved hand. Slide the fingers of the ungloved hand under the remained glove at the wrist. Peel the second glove off over the first glove. Discard into an appropriate lined waste bin.
- 8 Apron**
Apron front is contaminated. Unfasten or break ties. Pull apron away from neck and shoulders touching inside only. Fold and roll into a bundle. Discard into an appropriate lined waste bin.
- 9 Gown/Fluid repellent coverall**
Gown/Fluid repellent coverall front and sleeves are contaminated. Unfasten neck, then waist ties.
- 10**
Remove using a peeling motion; pull gown/Fluid repellent coverall from each shoulder towards the same hand.
- 11**
Gown/Fluid repellent coverall will turn inside out. Hold removed gown/Fluid repellent coverall away from body, roll into a bundle and discard into an appropriate lined waste bin or linen receptacle.
- 12 Eye Protection (Goggles/face shield)**
Outside of goggles or face shield are contaminated. Handle only by the headband or the sides. Discard into a lined waste bin or place into a receptacle for reprocessing/ decontamination.
- 13 Surgical Mask (or respirator)**
Front of mask/respirator is contaminated - do not touch. Unfasten the ties - first the bottom, then the top. Pull away from the face without touching front of mask/respirator. Discard disposable items into an appropriate lined waste bin. For reusable respirator place in designated receptacle for processing/ decontamination.

• Perform hand hygiene immediately on removal.
• All PPE should be removed before leaving the area and disposed of as healthcare waste.

Best Practice: Appendix 6 - Putting on and removing PPE (scot.nhs.uk)

All PPE should be:

- located close to the point of use
- stored in a clean and dry area to prevent contamination until needed for use
- within expiry dates
- single-use only items unless specified by the manufacturer
- changed immediately after individual use and/or following completion of a procedure or task, or as soon as it becomes soiled or damaged.



- Best practice is to store PPE in dispensers to reduce the risk of PPE becoming contaminated.
- It should be stored in a clean dry area until ready for use, e.g. *do not store boxes of gloves on top of toilet cisterns or hang aprons behind doors.*
- Gloves must comply with European Standard EN 455 Medical Gloves for single use (Parts 1-4) be CE marked and have the single use logo.



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References:

- Personal protective equipment (infectionpreventioncontrol.co.uk)
- National Infection Prevention and Control Manual: Care Home Infection Prevention and Control Manual (CH IPCM) (scot.nhs.uk)
- Health products policy and standards (who.int)
- NHS England » National infection prevention and control manual (NIPCM) for England
- Reprocessing of Reusable Medical Devices | FDA
- Microsoft Word - Single-use medical devicesREV (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- <https://www.istockphoto.com/photos/cartoon-syringe>
- <https://classroomclipart.com/image/vector-clipart/hand-covered-with-blue-glove-holds-syringe-animated-clipart-50855.htm>