

Bruyère guidelines for clinical staff to reduce contamination and cross-transmission of COVID-19

Occupational Health and Safety Services and Infection Prevention and Control are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased employee anxiety and awareness around spreading infectious diseases. Across the organization we are working together to minimize the spread between clinical care units and between employees and their families.

Here is a summary of guidelines employees can take to reduce these risks, and the ways that OHSS and IPAC are here to increase workplace safety and reduce the incidence of COVID-19 on our campuses.

Personal clothing and PPE practices to reduce cross-transmission:

1. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn to protect clothing from contamination. By protecting yourself and using your PPE properly at work, you are also protecting your family members and loved ones. For more information refer to: [IPAC tips and tools](#).
2. Do not access items such as cell phones from pockets while wearing PPE as this undermines the purpose of the PPE.
3. Regularly launder personal attire in a hot water wash cycle followed by a cycle in the dryer. For example:
 - a. Launder uniforms or lab coats that come in contact with the patient or patient environment after daily use and when visibly soiled.
 - b. Launder lab coats with no contact with the patient or patient environment weekly and when visibly soiled, e.g., hang lab coats prior to contact with the patient on a designated coat hook.
 - c. Hair and shoe coverings are not required PPE. If hair coverings are worn for personal or religious reasons, launder as normal.
4. Additional tips:
 - a. Washable clothing is preferred in the healthcare setting. Regularly launder clothing in a hot water wash cycle followed by a cycle in the dryer.
 - i. Avoid wearing dry-cleanable or hand-washable clothes to work.
 - b. Minimize contact between unprotected clothing, i.e., PPE/gown not worn, and the patient environment, e.g., do not lean up against walls, countertops, furniture, patient beds, or medical equipment.
 - c. Change your clothes at the end of a clinical day, either at the hospital or other facility, or once you arrive at home.
5. There are more guidelines for PPE use for non-clinical staff in [HR policy 9.13](#) and for clinical staff in the [IPAC COVID-19 guidelines](#).

What to do if your clothes become contaminated at work

If your clothing becomes soiled:

- Change your clothes or request new scrubs from management.

If blood or bodily fluids get on your skin, this qualifies as a potential exposure.

- Contact OHSS as soon as possible.
- If a small patch of intact skin is accidentally exposed, either wash the area with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR).
- For more information, consult [HR 9.1 Blood and body fluids, exposure](#).

If you work at multiples units or sites:

Per Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long Term Care [guidelines](#), Bruyère is working to limit employees from working at multiple locations. However, some employees do still work at multiple sites where there are not outbreaks or they work on multiple units. This section provides guidance for minimizing cross contamination for employees crossing from one unit to another.

If you work a double shift at two different sites:

- Bring a change of clothes to work.
- If you do not have a change of clothes prepared, request new scrubs from management

Further:

- Consider donning freshly laundered attire upon entry to the unit. Therefore your off-site attire will be protected from contamination.
- IPAC measures are adequate to prevent contamination; however, if uniforms or clothing is soiled, staff should change out of them before leaving their place of work.
- If you change at work or outside your home, transport used uniforms in a disposable or washable bag.

Prepared by OHSS and IPAC

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Adapted from Alberta Health Services COVID-19 guidance