



## Appropriate Glove Use

When used correctly, gloves are a vital piece of PPE equipment, however there are many occasions when gloves are not needed, and hand hygiene is completely effective in protecting you and the service user. Reduce unnecessary glove use, to help prevent the spread of infection, protect the skin on our hands and help reduce the impact on the environment.

In assessing the need for gloves and selecting the type of glove, consider the risks to the service user and the care worker.

### The assessment should include:

- who is at risk, and whether sterile or non-sterile gloves are required
- what the risk is – that is, the potential for exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions
- where the risk is – that is, contact with non-intact skin or mucous membranes during general care and any invasive procedures

### **Gloves are not an alternative to hand hygiene, and should generally not be worn except when a specific care task requires them**

- Wear gloves for care tasks involving contact with non-intact skin, or mucous membranes, and all activities where exposure to blood, body fluids secretions or excretions is anticipated - such as dressing wounds or carrying out personal care
- Gloves should be worn when applying topical creams or medications which might be absorbed into the skin of the care worker applying them
- Gloves should also be worn when handling chemicals as recommended by a Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessment, for example when handling cleaning products which may cause irritation. See [HSE advice on carrying out COSHH assessments](#)
- Wear sterile gloves for aseptic procedures and when inserting invasive devices such as urinary catheters

Gloves are **NOT** required to carry out near service user administrative tasks, eg when using the telephone, using a computer or tablet, writing in the care notes, giving oral medications

**Gloves must be:**

- appropriate for the tasks being undertaken, taking into account the substances being handled, type and duration of contact, size and comfort of the gloves, and the task and requirement for glove robustness and sensitivity
- put on immediately before the care activity, and changed between different care activities for the same service user (for example, between continence care and oral care)
- Changed between caring for different service users
- Single use, fit for purpose and well fitting
- Disposed of in the appropriate waste stream in accordance with local policy for waste management
- Changed if a perforation or puncture is suspected

**Do not decontaminate and reuse gloves**

Perform hand hygiene before putting on and after removal of gloves

**Resources**

[Infection prevention and control: resource for adult social care - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[NHS England » National infection prevention and control manual \(NIPCM\) for England](#)

