

Infection Control Program for Heritage Green Nursing Home

1. Introduction

The Infection Control Program aims to minimize the risk of infections and protect residents, staff, and visitors at Heritage Green Nursing Home. The program will outline the roles and responsibilities of all staff, establish infection prevention and control measures, and ensure continuous improvement in the home's infection control practices.

2. Objective

The main objectives of the Infection Control Program are to:

- Prevent the transmission of infectious diseases.
- Protect the health and safety of residents, staff, and visitors.
- Ensure compliance with local, provincial, and national infection control guidelines.
- Promote a culture of continuous improvement in infection prevention practices.

3. Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Lead

The Infection Prevention and Control Lead (IPAC Lead) is responsible for overseeing and implementing the Infection Control Program, ensuring policies and procedures are followed and continually assessing risks and improvements. The IPAC Lead will:

- Ensure all infection control protocols and guidelines are up-to-date and followed.
- Provide education and training to all staff on infection prevention and control measures.
- Coordinate the surveillance of infections, including reporting and investigation of outbreaks.
- Collaborate with Public Health authorities and regulatory bodies to ensure compliance.
- Monitor cleaning and disinfecting procedures, especially in high-risk areas.
- Report regularly to the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) and senior management regarding infection control performance and concerns.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Housekeeping Staff:

Housekeeping staff play a critical role in maintaining a clean and sanitary environment to reduce the spread of infections. Responsibilities include:

- Daily cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, resident rooms, common areas, and washrooms using approved disinfectants.
- Regular cleaning of equipment, furniture, and floors, especially in areas with higher infection risks (e.g., isolation rooms, common areas).
- Ensuring proper waste management, including disposing of contaminated items (e.g., gloves, masks, linens) in designated bins.
- Ensuring that cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) are used appropriately. Ensuring all handwashing stations, including sinks, soap dispensers, and paper towels, are functional and stocked.

Maintenance Staff:

Maintenance staff must ensure the proper functioning of the facility's infrastructure and support infection control efforts. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring HVAC systems are properly maintained and air quality is monitored to reduce infection risks.
- Collaborating with the IPAC Lead and housekeeping to ensure the proper functioning of infection control equipment and systems (e.g., laundry systems, waste management)

Registered Nurses (RNs) and Registered Practical Nurses (RPNs):

RNs and RPNs are frontline caregivers responsible for direct resident care. Their roles in infection control include:

- Conducting regular assessments of residents for signs and symptoms of infections.
- Administering appropriate antibiotics, antiviral, or antifungal treatments as prescribed.
- Ensuring proper use of PPE when providing direct care.
- Educating residents and family members about infection prevention, including hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and vaccination programs.
- Reporting suspected infections or outbreaks immediately to the IPAC Lead.

Personal Support Workers (PSWs):

PSWs provide hands-on care and assistance to residents, making them essential in infection prevention efforts. Their responsibilities include:

- Assisting residents with daily personal hygiene while adhering to infection prevention practices.
- Following hand hygiene protocols before and after caring for residents.
- Using appropriate PPE when providing direct care or when in contact with potentially contaminated surfaces.
- Reporting any signs or symptoms of infection to RNs/RPNs for timely assessment and intervention.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC):

The JHSC plays a vital role in ensuring the health and safety of all staff. Responsibilities include:

- Conducting regular audits of the facility's infection control practices and providing feedback for improvement.
- Ensuring that staff are provided with adequate PPE and training.
- Supporting the development and review of policies related to infection control and workplace safety.
- Assisting in investigations during outbreaks or incidents of exposure.

5. Infection Prevention and Control Policies**Hand Hygiene:**

- **Objective:** To prevent the spread of infections through proper hand hygiene.
- **Action:** Staff must wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (ABHS) whenever necessary, including before and after patient care, after using the restroom, and after handling waste or contaminated materials.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- **Objective:** To minimize the risk of exposure to infectious agents.
- **Action:** PPE (e.g., gloves, masks, gowns, face shields) must be used according to established guidelines when caring for residents, especially those in isolation or with confirmed infections.

Infection Control Audits and Surveillance:

- **Objective:** To identify potential risks and ensure timely interventions.
- **Action:** Regular audits will be conducted by the IPAC Lead to monitor infection control practices and compliance. Infection surveillance will be performed on a monthly basis to track infection trends.

Resident Care and Isolation Precautions:

- **Objective:** To prevent the spread of infections among residents.
- **Action:**
 - Residents with suspected or confirmed infections will be placed under appropriate isolation precautions (e.g., Contact, Droplet, and Airborne).
 - Isolation rooms will be equipped with the necessary PPE and disinfection supplies.
 - Staff will be trained in the proper use of isolation precautions, including the handling and disposal of contaminated materials.

Vaccination:

- **Objective:** To reduce the incidence of vaccine-preventable infections.
- **Action:** Encourage staff and residents to participate in vaccination programs, including annual flu shots and other recommended vaccinations, in consultation with healthcare providers.

6. Infection Control Training and Education:

- **Objective:** To ensure that all staff are knowledgeable about infection prevention practices.
- **Action:**
 - Training sessions on infection prevention and control will be provided to all staff upon hire and on an ongoing basis.
 - The IPAC Lead will ensure that training covers topics such as hand hygiene, PPE use, outbreak management, and infection control policies.
 - Staff will receive periodic refresher training to stay updated with the latest infection control protocols.

7. Outbreak Management:

Identification:

- Outbreaks will be identified based on defined criteria (e.g., increased cases of gastrointestinal illness, respiratory symptoms).
- Immediate reporting to the IPAC Lead and Hamilton Public Health authorities is required for investigation

Response:

- A rapid response team, including the IPAC Lead, RNs, and relevant staff, will be assembled to manage the outbreak.
- Isolation of affected residents, restriction of visitors, and enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols will be implemented.

Communication:

- Families, staff, and residents will be informed of any outbreaks and the measures in place to contain them.
- Regular updates will be provided by the IPAC Lead to all stakeholders.

8. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement:

- Infection control performance will be regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure the effectiveness of interventions.
- Feedback from staff, residents, and families will be sought to identify areas for improvement.
- The Infection Control Program will be updated as necessary to comply with new regulations or emerging infection risks.

9. Conclusion

Heritage Green Nursing Home's Infection Control Program is designed to protect the health and safety of residents, staff, and visitors. By following established protocols and fostering a culture of safety, the facility aims to minimize the risks of infection while providing quality care for its residents. All staff must remain vigilant and committed to infection control practices to ensure the well-being of the home's community.