

Nursing Bag Infection Prevention & Control Techniques for In-Home Health Care Providers¹



To prevent and control the spread of infections and the transmission of pathogens during home visits, always follow Standard Precautions²

PREPARE FOR A HOME VISIT:

- Pack your bag with necessary supplies prior to leaving for visits.
- Place hand hygiene supplies where you can easily access them - near the top of the bag or in a side pocket.

REMINDERS:

- Hand hygiene will be performed frequently during the home visit. Perform hand hygiene:
 - before touching a patient,
 - before a procedure,
 - after blood and body fluid exposure,
 - after touching a patient, and
 - after touching the patients' surroundings.³
- Dispose of sharps in an approved sharps container, and do not place sharps containers in your bag.
- Keep your bag closed as much as possible during the home visit.

TRANSPORT TO HOME VISIT:

- Place your bag in a clean storage container in the trunk or other compartment. Avoid placing your bag on the floor.
- Have a container for "clean items" and a separate container for used and soiled items. Mark the containers clearly.
- Public transport; place your bag on your lap or use a disposable bag cover as a barrier. Dispose of used cover prior to entering the home & replace upon leaving. Be prepared with extra bags for disposable and/or soiled items, and your sharps container.

IN THE HOME:



- Place your bag on a clean, dry, hard, flat surface away from pets and children, and ensure workspace is large enough. Do NOT place your bag on the floor.
- Keep your bag closed when not in use.
- Prepare work area; place your bag on an impermeable disposable underpad and place bag handles under the bag.
- Prepare a trash bag for disposable and soiled items, and a sharps container.*
- Remove needed items from your bag, place on designated clean barrier, and close your bag.*
- Perform patient care.*
- Clean and disinfect reusable items (e.g., blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, etc.) with an agency approved sanitizer cloth following the product manufacturer's instructions for wet contact time.*
- Return only cleaned and disinfected items to your bag.
- Place any reusable items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected while in the home into a sealed, impermeable plastic bag. Place this bag in the container marked for soiled items in your vehicle, or in your extra bag if you take public transportation.
- Place the sharps container in the container for used and soiled items for transport.
- Dispose of the impermeable barrier.*

* Perform Hand Hygiene

CARE OF YOUR NURSING BAG:

- Clean and disinfect your bag thoroughly when soiled and according to your agency's policies and procedures. Follow all chemical manufacturers' instructions for use, including for wet contact time.
- Avoid taking your bag into homes of patients with antibiotic resistant infections such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) or Vancomycin-resistant Enterococci (VRE).
- Avoid taking your bag into an infested home. Only carry essential items in. ¹ Bedbugs can easily transport from an infested home to your car, home, or next home visit.)^{1, 4}

¹ McGoldrick M. Best Practices for Home care "bag technique" and the use of surface barriers. *Home Healthcare Now*, 2017;35(9):p 478-484 https://journals.lww.com/homehealthcarenurseonline/Fulltext/2017/10000/Best_Practices_for_Home_Care_Bag_Technique_and.3.aspx

² Standard Precautions for All Patient Care. CDC, 2016 <https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/standard-precautions.html>

³ Hand hygiene: why, how, & when? WHO https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/documents/health-topics/hand-hygiene-why-how-and-when-brochure.pdf?sfvrsn=9b52e145_2&download=true

⁴ Miller DM, Kells S. Bed bug action plan for home health care and social workers. *Virginia Tech*, 2014 <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-healthcare1.pdf>