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LCS-PP-COR218	4.0	Ruth Wearne, QM	Tarina Venturin, OM
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NDIS Standard:	Core Module; Governance and Operational Management		

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all Staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to infection control protocols and procedures. Staff must adhere to relevant State and Territory guidelines for infection control and as implemented by at all times. Staff must undertake relevant training before performing any tasks that put any persons at risk of infections. Staff are also to comply with relevant instructions in relation to appropriate use of PPE.

The objective of the Infection Control programme is to identify the requirements of infection prevention and control and the development of safe work practices for staff based upon risk management procedures.

The risks associated with infections in the workplace will be addressed via a risk management approach and are designed to be consistent with Lifestyle Centred Services's clinical governance framework.

2.0 Scope

It is acknowledged that infection control in a medical facility or clinic is legislated by state and federal regulatory bodies and is supported by a range of standards and guidelines.

Therefore, nothing in this policy, either implied or stated, is intended to mitigate Lifestyle Centred Services's responsibilities towards infection control legislation or guidelines administered by the relevant state and federal Health Departments or as guided or directed by any authorised body such as the World Health Organisation.

Any such requirements must be assessed, addressed and implemented separately and where necessary, would be seen in addition to any health and safety requirements detailed in this policy.

However, to maintain and improve the quality of care of all clients, staff and visitors to the workplace, an effective Infection Control programme will be implemented that considers every aspect of care and treatment within the context of the scope of the business.

3.0 Responsibilities

All actively employed Staff at

4.0 Definitions

The broad definition of infection is the invasion of tissue by pathogenic organisms. Infections generally result from a combination of factors, including:

- the micro-organisms present
- a compromised or weakened status of the host and
- the chain of transmission of the micro-organism.

Bacteria, viruses and other organisms, which can cause disease in humans, may be found wherever people live and work.

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5.0 Policy

Identifying infection transmission hazards

Microorganisms are transmitted by various routes and the same infective agent may be transmitted by more than one route. There are several main routes of transmission:

- blood borne transmission through such things as needle sticks or contact with cuts or scratches
- direct contact through person to person contact or via contaminated articles or equipment
- droplet transmission such as through sneezing, coughing or talking
- airborne transmission through microscopic droplets or dust particles
- gastrointestinal infection through contaminated food or fluid or via an infected food handler and/or
- vector borne infections transmitted by carrier insects or animals such as mosquitoes, flies or rats.

The source of infection may be clients, staff or visitors and the person may either be acutely ill or in the incubation (window) period of a disease. They may be a chronic carrier or colonised with the infective agent but have no apparent disease.

Contaminated items in the environment, including surfaces, equipment, medications or food are other possible sources of infection.

The ability to resist infection varies depending upon age and underlying medical conditions. Other factors such as nutritional status or drug therapy may also reduce a person's immunity, making them more susceptible to infection.

Persons who have been recently exposed to trauma or who have recently undergone surgery, or invasive therapeutic and/or diagnostic procedures will also have an increased susceptibility to infection.

Assessing infection transmission hazards

As part of the risk management approach, Lifestyle Centred Services has an obligation to ensure that workers and visitors to the workplace are not exposed to any infections, as far as is practicable.

Given the nature of our work, it is safe to assume that any infection brought into the workplace will pose a risk of injury to workers, visitors and to other clients. They will therefore be assessed according to symptomatic observations, client history, employment and/or recreational activities and behavioural observations of clients.

When approaching a clinical task or duty, consideration must be given to the potential pathological agents involved, the transmission paths of the agents and who may potentially be at risk. The overall risk can then be analysed and assessed based on:

- what are the aspects of the task or procedure that facilitates transmission of infection
- what existing controls are in place
- what is the likelihood of transmission

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- what are the likely consequences of transmission and
- what factors will increase or decrease the risk of transmission.

Controlling infection transmission hazards

Lifestyle Centred Services will ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that the risks associated with infections in the workplace are controlled. The process of controlling exposure to infection transmission risks will be determined in consultation with the workers who are required to carry out the particular task.

Infection control will be achieved through the development and implementation of the Infection Control programme that will include the effective management of infectious diseases and infection risks through:

- the development of infection control principles
- the development of administrative requirements designed to minimise the risk of infection transmission
- the development of effective work practices and procedures
- the implementation of an immunisation program
- ensuring that all staff required to undertake a task that may potentially expose them to infection through their work have sufficient training, skills, knowledge, level of competence and education and/or qualifications to undertake the task and
- a regular review of the program.

In the event that exposure to infections within the workplace have been assessed as a risk, consistent with national and international requirements, Lifestyle Centred Services will adopt a two-tiered approach to infection control precautions.

Tier 1 Controls

The first tier of control is referred to as standard precautions and will be applied to all clients regardless of their diagnosis or presumed infection status wherever there is potential contact with:

- blood
- body substances, secretions and excretions
- non-intact skin or
- mucous membranes, including eyes.

Standard precautions will involve the use of safe work practices and the use of protective barriers, including:

- hand hygiene
- routine environmental cleaning
- managing spills
- waste management
- the safe use and disposal of sharps
- decontamination of equipment
- appropriate use of gloves
- use of facial protection/masks
- use of gowns/aprons and other protective clothing
- appropriate device handling
- appropriate handling of any laundry items and/or gowns or aprons and

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- incorporation of respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette

Tier 2 Controls

Additional control measures will be initiated where clients are known or suspected to be infected with pathogens. These precautions are in addition to the standard precautions and are referred to as Tier 2, or 'transmission-based precautions' (TBPs).

TBPs are used in addition to standard precautions when standard precautions alone may be insufficient to prevent transmission of infection.

The three types of additional precautions are:

- airborne precautions which must be applied where the client is known or suspected to be infected with pathogens that can be transmitted by an airborne route. For example, Aspergillus, Legionella, Pulmonary tuberculosis, Chickenpox, Measles and Coronaviruses. These will include isolation of the client and the use of a type P2/N95 mask that meets the requirements of *Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1716:2012 Respiratory Protection Devices*
- droplet precautions which must be applied where the client is known or suspected of being infected with pathogens that can be transmitted by droplet route. For example, Influenza, Bordetella pertussis (whooping cough), Rubella, Listeria, E. coli, Salmonella and Coronaviruses. These will include isolation of the client, maintaining a separation distance of at least one metre, the use of protective eyewear and the initiation of room cleaning protocols and
- contact precautions designed to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms by direct or indirect contact. For example, viral Gastroenteritis, Clostridium difficile, Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (also known as MRSA or staph) and Coronaviruses. These will include additional precautions to eliminate contamination of environmental surfaces and equipment with used gloves and the implementation of additional room cleaning protocols.

IMMUNISATION PROGRAM

To help ensure Lifestyle Centred Services meets its health and safety obligations to minimise the workplace risks to workers, particularly those in relation to the risk of exposure to vaccine preventable diseases in the workplace, Lifestyle Centred Services will develop and implement an appropriate immunisation program.

According to health authorities, immunisation is one of the safest ways to protect people against harmful infections before they come into contact with them by using the body's natural defences to build resistance to specific infections.

Therefore, to the extent that is permissible under law and where it is determined as necessary through the application of a risk management approach and in accordance with relevant medical advice, Lifestyle Centred Services may make the requirement for immunisation against any particular disease or infection, a condition of employment or engagement with Lifestyle Centred Services.

Prior to the implementation of an immunisation program, Lifestyle Centred Services will:

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- seek appropriate and independent medical advice to ensure the recommended program meets any and all Government and health authority guidelines as well as the requirements of the National Immunisation Program and its related immunisation schedules
- encourage workers to seek their own independent medical advice regarding the program
- provide information to all workers on the immunisation programs currently recommended by health authorities for Lifestyle Centred Services' business sector and
- ensure its infection control policy and program is fully implemented so as to minimise transmission and risks of infectious diseases being transmitted in the workplace.

Where an immunisation program is not possible or a worker is unable to be vaccinated for any reason, Lifestyle Centred Services will implement sufficient and appropriate alternative control measures to eliminate or reduce the risk of disease transmission at the workplace.

Safe handling, use and disposal of sharps

A sharp is any object that is capable of inflicting a penetrating injury and includes needles, broken glass, broken capillary tubes and any other sharp object or instruments designed to perform penetrating procedures. The potential for the transmission of blood borne viruses is greatest when sharps are used. As such, Lifestyle Centred Services will develop a policy and procedures for the safe handling, use and disposal of sharps.

Support Workers are not permitted to administer subcutaneous injections at any time.

Reusable medical instruments and equipment

Reusable medical instruments and equipment must be appropriately processed, handled, packaged and stored to prevent contamination of the item. Where reusable medical instruments and equipment are used in the course of treatment, it shall be reprocessed through all the steps necessary to ensure the device is ready for use. This will include cleaning, functional testing, inspecting, packaging, labelling, disinfecting and sterilising.

Lifestyle Centred Services will develop protocols on the re-processing of reusable medical instruments and equipment.

Environmental cleaning

Environmental cleaning refers to the appropriate cleaning of surfaces. Deposits of dust, soil and microbes on surfaces are a potential source of associated infections.

Workplace should be cleaned at least once a day. More frequent cleaning may be required in some circumstances. If equipment is shared between persons, it should be cleaned between uses, where practicable.

The following basic principles should be followed:

- written cleaning protocols should be prepared, including methods and frequency of cleaning
- cleaning procedures must be commensurate with the level of risk and tailored accordingly
- standard precautions (including wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE), as applicable) must be implemented when cleaning surfaces and facilities
- cleaning methods should avoid generation of aerosols

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- all cleaning items should be changed after each use and cleaned and dried before being used again. They should also be changed immediately following the cleaning of blood or body fluid/substance spills. Single-use cleaning items are preferred, where possible, such as lint-free cleaning cloths
- Disinfectant sprays (such as Glen 20) are not be used, because they can become contaminated and are difficult to clean. Sprays are not effective, as they do not touch all parts of the surface to be cleaned
- detergents should not be mixed with other chemicals and
- all cleaning solutions should be prepared fresh before use.

Lifestyle Centred Services will ensure that a person is identified and nominated as being responsible for the implementation, management and evaluation of the cleaning service provided.

MANAGING SPILLS OF BLOOD, BODY FLUIDS AND SUBSTANCES

Lifestyle Centred Services will ensure there are procedures in place for dealing with blood, bodily fluids and substance spills. Cleaning protocols should be included alongside safe work procedures and emphasised in ongoing training.

The basic principles of blood and body fluid/substance spills management are:

- standard precautions should apply, including the use of PPE, as applicable
- spills should be cleared up before the area is cleaned (adding cleaning liquids to spills increases the size of the spill and should be avoided) and
- generation of aerosols from spilled material should be avoided.

The management of spills should be flexible enough to cope with different types of spills whilst also considering the following factors:

- the nature (type) of the spill – for example chemical substances, sputum, vomit, faeces, urine or blood
- the pathogens most likely to be involved in these different types of spills – for example, stool samples may contain viruses, bacteria or protozoan pathogens, whereas sputum may contain *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*
- the size of the spill – for example, spot (few drops), small (<10cm) or large (>10cm)
- the type of surface – for example, carpet or impervious flooring
- the location involved – that is, whether the spill occurs in a contained area (such as office), in a public location or within a community premises and
- whether there is any likelihood of bare skin contact with the soiled (contaminated) surface.

Cleaning spills – equipment

Standard cleaning equipment, including a mop, cleaning bucket and cleaning agents, should be readily available for spills management. It should also be stored in an area known to all staff.

To help manage spills in areas where cleaning materials may not be readily available, a disposable 'spills kit' could be used, containing a large (20L) reusable plastic container or bucket with fitted lid, containing the following items:

- appropriate leak-proof biohazard bags and containers for disposal of waste material
- a designated, sturdy scraper and pan for spills
- absorbent mats and paper

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- approximately five sachets of a granular formulation containing 10,000ppm available chlorine or equivalent (each sachet should contain sufficient granules to cover a 10cm diameter spill)
- disposable rubber gloves suitable for cleaning
- eye protection (disposable or reusable)
- plastic apron and
- a respiratory protection device, for protection against inhalation of powder from the disinfectant granules or aerosols (which may be generated from high-risk spills during the cleaning process).

Single-use items in the spills kit should be replaced after each use of the spills kit. With all spill management protocols, it is essential that the affected area is left clean and dry before use of the area.

Cleaning spills – procedures

Care should be taken to thoroughly clean and dry areas where there is any possibility of bare skin contact with the surface.

PPE should be used for all cleaning procedures and disposed of or sent for cleaning after use. Hands should be washed and dried after cleaning.

Where a spill occurs on a carpet, shampoo as soon as possible. Do not use disinfectant. Steam cleaning may be used instead.

Cleaning spots or small spills

Spots or drops of substances or other small spills (up to 10cm) can easily be managed by wiping the area immediately with paper towels, and then cleaning with warm water and detergent, followed by rinsing and drying the area. Dry the area, as wet areas attract contaminants.

Cleaning large spills

Where large spills (more than 10cm) have occurred in a 'wet' area, such as a bathroom or toilet area, the spill should be carefully washed off into the sewerage system using copious amounts of water and the area flushed with warm water and detergent.

Large spills that have occurred in 'dry' areas should be contained and generation of aerosols should be avoided.

Granular formulations that produce high available chlorine concentrations can contain the spilled material and are useful for preventing aerosols. A scraper and pan should be used to remove the absorbed material. The area of the spill should then be cleaned with a mop, and a bucket of warm water and detergent. The bucket and mop should be thoroughly cleaned after use and stored dry.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Lifestyle Centred Services will ensure that procedures are in place for the correct management of all waste generated and that they are compliant with regulations and guidelines administered by other Government agencies eg Environmental Protection Agencies and Local Government Ordinances.

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All waste should be stored in secure areas until collected. Waste should be removed from workplace areas each day and more frequently as needed, such as from specialised areas. Waste bags should be tied before removing from the area.

General waste disposal

Place in general waste bin for removal.

Biohazard waste disposal

Place in biohazard bags as soon as possible. Biohazard bags have a biohazard symbol and are currently coloured yellow.

Medical/other conditions

Due to the potential hazards associated with this practice such as possible exposure to pathogens and infection, workers are required to disclose any medical condition or disability, which may affect their capacity to participate in specific work activities that may impact upon their health and safety or the health and safety of others.

If a worker becomes aware of any condition, disability or impairment (temporary or otherwise), which may potentially affect their capacity to participate safely in work activities, or activities related to their work, they should immediately advise management as soon as practicable so that a suitable and applicable risk assessment can be undertaken.

All such discussions will be considered strictly confidential in accordance with Lifestyle Centred Services' privacy requirements. Any medical information disclosed will be used only for the purpose for which it was collected and will not be disclosed to other parties unless permitted by law, without the consent of the person making the disclosure.

Worker responsibilities

To ensure the overall success of the infection control program at this practice and clinic, workers must be able to implement the established infection control measures and follow the protocols that have been developed. To this end, Lifestyle Centred Services will ensure that they:

- have been trained and deemed competent by Lifestyle Centred Services in the infection control protocols of this practice before undertaking any work where they may come into direct contact with clients, waste from their respective treatments or equipment, instruments and apparatus used during service delivery
- have sufficient training, skills, knowledge, level of competence and qualifications required to undertake any task that may potentially expose them to the risk of infection at work or undertaking work related activities
- have sufficient skills and training in the effective use of all PPE required by Lifestyle Centred Services to eliminate or minimise the risk of infection to themselves or others at work
- follow any reasonable instruction given to them by Lifestyle Centred Services designed to eliminate or minimise the risk of infection to themselves or others at work, including the mandatory use of PPE when and where required
- actively participate in the development and review of Lifestyle Centred Services' infection control protocols and procedures

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- actively participate in the development and review of Lifestyle Centred Services' administrative requirements designed to minimise the risk of infection transmission at work
- will advise management immediately when they become aware of any potential exposure to infection to themselves or others at work during the course of their work
- will not undertake any activity, action or inaction that may knowingly place themselves or others at work at risk of exposure to an infection
- will advise management immediately when they become aware of contracting any illness or disease or having become aware of any condition, disability or impairment (temporary or otherwise), that may potentially affect their capacity to participate in specific work activities or where specific work activities may further impact upon their health, safety or welfare or the health and safety of others at work
- subject to medical advice or other defined reasons, actively participate in any recognised immunisation program recommended for Lifestyle Centred Services by an authorised health authority, accepting that such immunisation may be a condition of employment or engagement by Lifestyle Centred Services and
- will inform management if they are not immunised against that disease, should an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease occur at the workplace. The worker will be directed to consult with their own doctor as soon as possible and may be directed not to attend work during the outbreak.

5.0 Related Documents

- LCS-FRM-COR217 Hazard Report Form
- LCS-FRM-COR2114 Permanent Worksite Checklist
- LCS-FRM-COR2115 OH&S Risk Assessment
- LCS-FRM-COR2116 Safety Review Checklist
- LCS-FRM-COR2117 Infection Control Checklist

6.0 References

- Victorian Government Health – Infection Control Guidelines
- Occupational Health and Safety Act (VIC) 2004
- Work Health and Safety Act (QLD) 2011