

Medical News

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CDC Draft Guideline for Hand Hygiene

The CDC recently issued a draft of the "Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Healthcare Settings," and comments in response currently are being reviewed. The final guideline will be published following revisions. The guideline was developed for practitioners who provide care for patients and who are responsible for monitoring and preventing infections in healthcare settings. It is intended to replace the hand-hygiene recommendations in the "CDC Guideline for Handwashing and Hospital Environmental Control, 1985."¹

The draft guideline is designed to provide healthcare practitioners with a thorough review of evidence dealing with hand washing and hand antisepsis in healthcare settings and specific recommendations to promote improved hand-hygiene practices and to reduce transmission of pathogenic microorganisms to patients and personnel in healthcare settings. "Part I: Review of Scientific Data on Hand Hygiene Practices in Healthcare Settings" provides an historical perspective on hand hygiene and reviews in detail the efficacy of various agents used for hand washing and hand antisepsis and factors affecting adherence of healthcare personnel to recommended hand-hygiene practices. Part I also discusses evidence documenting transmission of pathogens on hands, the relation between hand hygiene and acquisition of healthcare-acquired pathogens, and methods for improving hand hygiene. "Part II: Recommendations" provides consensus recommendations from the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee and other professional societies for the practice of hand hygiene in healthcare settings, including hospitals and ambulatory care, home care, and long-term-care settings.

REFERENCE

1. Garner JS, Favero MS. CDC Guideline for handwashing and hospital environmental control, 1985. *Infect Control* 1986;7:231-243.

CDC Teleconference on Bioterrorism and Epidemiology

The CDC, in collaboration with SHEA, APIC, IDSA and other healthcare organizations, hosted a teleconference on November 16 and 19, 2001, entitled "CDC Responds: Bioterrorism and the Healthcare Epidemiology/Infection Control Team." Faculty included CDC staff James M. Hughes, MD; Julie L. Gerberding, MD, MPH; Lisa D. Rotz, MD; Lynn Steele, MS, CIC; Michele Pearson, MD; and Healthcare Infection Control Advisory Committee Chair, Robert A. Weinstein, MD.

The program presented an update of the events related to bioterrorism, including a summary of the current

investigation and an overview of practical preparedness guidance for the healthcare epidemiology team. Also included was a discussion of clinical syndromes for which surveillance should be heightened to identify anthrax and smallpox, recommendations for disinfection practices, mail-handling guidance, and other infection control issues.

To order a copy of this broadcast, call the Public Health Foundation at 1-877-252-1200 (US) or 301-645-7773 (International), 9:00 AM-5:00 PM EST, or go to <http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/PHTN>. The CDC has an extensive web site of key documents and news on bioterrorism and disaster preparedness at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov>.

Anthrax Update and Resources

by Judene Bartley

As of November 23, 2001, the CDC reported 18 confirmed cases of anthrax with 5 deaths; 11 cases were inhalational and 7 were cutaneous. The fifth and most recent death was a 94-year-old Connecticut woman. It still remains a puzzle as to how she came into contact with anthrax. The death of 61-year-old Kathy Nguyen of New York City on October 31 remains a mystery as well, although mail contact remains highest on the list as the possible source of exposure for both cases. The other three inhalational deaths include a 63-year-old photo editor in Florida and two postal workers in Washington, DC, aged 47 and 55. The remaining 6 people who contracted inhalational anthrax are recovering.

The CDC posts updated information on the status of the US anthrax investigation in a special section of their bioterrorism web site, www.bt.cdc.gov. This anthrax section provides updates on the status of the anthrax investigation, information on the agent, case definitions, and advisories for protecting investigators, first responders, and mail handlers. Clinical and laboratory information is also available in the form of fact sheets, slides from recent programs (.pdf format), and links to related sites, including *MMWR* reports on anthrax. The CDC bioterrorism web site also provides a media link that includes daily press releases and transcripts of telephone press briefings.

The CDC's Public Health Training Network provides access to programs on diagnosis, treatment, and patient management at <http://www.phppo.cdc.gov/PHTN>.

PVC-Containing Devices: FDA Update

The FDA recently released a Consumer Update on the human health exposure risks of di-(2-ethylhexyl)phthalate (DEHP). DEHP is a plasticizer used in many PVC