

Polio: Infection Prevention and Control Guidance for Inpatient Care

What precautions are required for suspect, probable or confirmed cases of polio?

Immediate action is required when a patient presents with polio-like symptoms, and the person:

1. is not vaccinated or is immunocompromised,
2. has a travel history to [a country where polio is present](#) and/or
3. has been in contact with a person who has been infected with poliovirus.

The following measures must be taken:

- Always follow [Routine Practices](#), including a PCRA, and implement [Contact Precautions](#).
- The healthcare provider should don a long-sleeved gown and gloves when contact with the patient or environment is anticipated.
- Place the patient in a private room with a private bathroom.
- Only staff who are fully vaccinated (at least four doses of IPV or trivalent OPV in any combination) against poliovirus and are not immunocompromised should provide care for a patient with confirmed or suspected poliovirus.
- Notify Environmental Services to clean surfaces that could have been touched by the patient in waiting areas or public washrooms. Cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces can be accomplished with currently approved hospital grade cleaner/disinfectants.
- [Additional Precautions](#) are only discontinued in consultation with Infection Prevention and Control.

If a case is suspected, notify [Public Health](#), Infectious Diseases, and Infection Prevention and Control immediately.

What PPE is required for healthcare providers?

- A disposable long sleeved gown
- Gloves
- Any additional PPE as indicated using a PCRA.

All PPE should be donned before entering the patient's room. All PPE must be discarded prior to leaving the isolation room after contact with the patient and/or their environment and hand hygiene performed.

Are there any other considerations?

- Visitors should be restricted to those necessary for care or compassionate grounds. If permitted, visitors are required to wear the same PPE as healthcare providers.
 - Staff should ensure the visitor does not use the patient washroom and should not consume food or drink while visiting.
 - Visitors should not be young children or be immunocompromised.
- Perform proper hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) or soap and water before and after every contact with an infected patient and/or their environment of care. If hands are visibly soiled, soap and water is the preferred method.
 - Hand hygiene should always be performed after removal of gloves.
- Ensure correct containment and disposal of contaminated waste (e.g., dressings) in biohazardous waste disposal bags.
- Wear PPE and take care when handling soiled laundry (e.g., bedding, towels, personal clothing).
- Dedicate equipment and supplies (e.g. blood pressure cuffs and stethoscopes) to the patient with or suspected to have polio, where possible. Ensure that any equipment used on the patient is cleaned and disinfected before being used with another patient.
- Cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces in the patient care environment can be accomplished with currently approved hospital grade cleaner/ disinfectants. Attention should be paid to high-touch surfaces.

What type of environmental cleaning and disinfection is required after a discharge of a patient with polio?

For discharge environmental cleaning and disinfection:

- Environmental Services staff must wear a gown and gloves during cleaning and disinfection.
- Use standard discharge cleaning and disinfection protocols.
- All disposable items in the patient's room should be discarded.
- Privacy curtains must be changed.
- Equipment/supplies that cannot be disinfected must be discarded.

References

Public Health Agency of Canada (2023). Guidance for the response and management of a poliovirus event or outbreak in Canada.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/diseases-conditions/guidance-response-management-poliovirus-event-outbreak-canada.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2023) Poliomyelitis (polio) vaccines: Canadian Immunization Guide. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-part-4-active-vaccines/page-17-poliomyelitis-vaccine.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada (2023). Polio: For health professionals. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/poliomyelitis-polio/health-professionals.html>