



Center for Clinical Standards and Quality/Quality, Safety & Oversight Group

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DATE: March 20, 2024
TO: State Survey Agency Directors
FROM: Director, Quality, Safety & Oversight Group (QSOG)
SUBJECT: Enhanced Barrier Precautions in Nursing Homes

Memorandum Summary

- CMS is issuing new guidance for State Survey Agencies and long term care (LTC) facilities on the use of enhanced barrier precautions (EBP) to align with nationally accepted standards.
- EBP recommendations now include use of EBP for residents with chronic wounds or indwelling medical devices during high-contact resident care activities regardless of their multidrug-resistant organism status.
- The new guidance related to EBP is being incorporated into F880 Infection Prevention and Control.

Background:

Multidrug-resistant organism (MDRO) transmission is common in long term care (LTC) facilities (i.e., nursing homes), contributing to substantial resident morbidity and mortality and increased healthcare costs. Many residents in nursing homes are at increased risk of becoming colonized and developing infections with MDROs.

In 2019, CDC introduced a new approach to the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) called Enhanced Barrier Precautions (EBP) as a strategy in nursing homes to decrease transmission of CDC-targeted and epidemiologically important MDROs when contact precautions do not apply. The approach recommended gown and glove use for certain residents during specific high-contact resident care activities associated with MDRO transmission and did not involve resident room restriction.

As described in the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) white paper, "[Consideration for the Use of Enhanced Barrier Precautions in Skilled Nursing Facilities](#)" dated June 2021, more than 50% of nursing home residents may be colonized with an MDRO. This report noted that the use of contact precautions to prevent MDRO transmission involves restricting residents to their rooms, which may negatively impact a resident's quality of life and psychosocial well-being. As a result, many nursing homes only implemented contact precautions when residents are infected with an MDRO.

In July 2022, the CDC released updated EBP recommendations for “[Implementation of PPE Use in nursing homes to prevent spread of MDROs](#),” and therefore, CMS is updating its infection prevention and control guidance accordingly. The recommendations now include the use of EBP during high-contact care activities for residents with chronic wounds or indwelling medical devices, regardless of their MDRO status, in addition to residents who have an infection or colonization with a CDC-targeted or other epidemiologically important MDRO when contact precautions do not apply.

This new guidance related to EBP is being incorporated in F880 Infection Prevention and Control to assist LTC surveyors when evaluating the use of enhanced barrier precautions in nursing homes. We note that facilities have some discretion when implementing EBP and balancing the need to maintain a homelike environment for residents.

Regulations and Guidance:

F880

§483.80 Infection Control

The facility must establish and maintain an infection prevention and control program designed to provide a safe, sanitary, and comfortable environment and to help prevent the development and transmission of communicable diseases and infections.

§483.80(a) Infection prevention and control program.

The facility must establish an infection prevention and control program (IPCP) that must include, at a minimum, the following elements:

§483.80(a)(1) A system for preventing, identifying, reporting, investigating, and controlling infections and communicable diseases for all residents, staff, volunteers, visitors, and other individuals providing services under a contractual arrangement based upon the facility assessment conducted according to §483.70(e) and following accepted national standards;

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GUIDANCE

“Enhanced Barrier Precautions” (EBP) refer to an infection control intervention designed to reduce transmission of multidrug-resistant organisms that employs targeted gown and glove use during high contact resident care activities.

EBP are used in conjunction with standard precautions and expand the use of PPE to donning of gown and gloves during high-contact resident care activities that provide opportunities for transfer of MDROs to staff hands and clothing.

EBP are indicated for residents with any of the following:

- Infection or colonization with a CDC-targeted MDRO when Contact Precautions do not otherwise apply; or
- Wounds and/or indwelling medical devices even if the resident is not known to be infected or colonized with a MDRO.

Wounds generally include chronic wounds, not shorter-lasting wounds, such as skin breaks or skin tears covered with an adhesive bandage (e.g., Band-Aid®) or similar dressing. Examples of

chronic wounds include, but are not limited to, pressure ulcers, diabetic foot ulcers, unhealed surgical wounds, and venous stasis ulcers.

Indwelling medical device examples include central lines, urinary catheters, feeding tubes, and tracheostomies. A peripheral intravenous line (not a peripherally inserted central catheter) is not considered an indwelling medical device for the purpose of EBP.

EBP should be used for any residents who meet the above criteria, wherever they reside in the facility.

Facilities **have discretion** in using EBP for residents who do not have a chronic wound or indwelling medical device and are infected or colonized with an MDRO that is not currently targeted by CDC.

Table 1: Implementing Contact versus Enhanced Barrier Precautions

This table only applies to MDROs, not all pathogens that may require use of transmission-based precautions.

Resident Status	Contact Precautions	Use EBP
Infected or colonized with any MDRO and has secretions or excretions that are unable to be covered or contained.	Yes	No
Infected or colonized with a CDC-targeted MDRO without a wound, indwelling medical device or secretions or excretions that are unable to be covered or contained.	No	Yes
Infected or colonized with a non-CDC targeted MDRO without a wound, indwelling medical device, or secretions or excretions that are unable to be covered or contained.	No	At the discretion of the facility
Has a wound or indwelling medical device, and secretions or excretions that are unable to be covered or contained and are not known to be infected or colonized with any MDRO.	Yes, unless/until a specific organism is identified.	Yes, if they do not meet the criteria for contact precautions.
Has a wound or indwelling medical device, without secretions or excretions that are unable to be covered or contained and are not known to be infected or colonized with any MDRO.	No	Yes

Examples of secretions or excretions include wound drainage, fecal incontinence or diarrhea, or other discharges from the body that cannot be contained and pose an increased potential for extensive environmental contamination and risk of transmission of a pathogen.

For residents for whom EBP are indicated, EBP is employed when performing the following high-contact resident care activities:

- Dressing
- Bathing/showering
- Transferring
- Providing hygiene
- Changing linens
- Changing briefs or assisting with toileting
- Device care or use: central line, urinary catheter, feeding tube, tracheostomy/ventilator
- Wound care: any skin opening requiring a dressing

Note: In general, gowns and gloves would not be recommended when performing transfers in common areas such as dining or activity rooms, where contact is anticipated to be shorter in duration. Outside the resident's room, EBP should be followed when performing transfers or assisting during bathing in a shared/common shower room and when working with residents in the therapy gym, specifically when anticipating close physical contact while assisting with transfers and mobility.

Residents are not restricted to their rooms or limited from participation in group activities. Because EBP do not impose the same activity and room placement restrictions as Contact Precautions, they are intended to be in place for the duration of a resident's stay in the facility or until resolution of the wound or discontinuation of the indwelling medical device that placed them at higher risk.

Facilities have discretion on how to communicate to staff which residents require the use of EBP. CMS supports facilities in using creative (e.g., subtle) ways to alert staff when EBP use is necessary to help maintain a home-like environment, as long as staff are aware of which residents require the use of EBP prior to providing high-contact care activities.

Facilities should ensure PPE and alcohol-based hand rub are readily accessible to staff. Discretion may be used in the placement of supplies which may include placement near or outside the resident's room. PPE for enhanced barrier precautions is only necessary when performing high-contact care activities and may not need to be donned prior to entering the resident's room. For example, staff entering the resident's room to answer a call light, converse with a resident, or provide medications who do **not** engage in a high-contact resident care activity would likely not need to employ EBP while interacting with the resident.

Information regarding CDC-targeted MDROs and current recommendations on EBP are available on the CDC's webpage, "Implementation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Use in Nursing Homes to Prevent Spread of Multidrug-resistant Organisms (MDROs)," at <https://www.cdc.gov/hai/containment/PPE-Nursing-Homes.html>.

Survey Procedures

Surveyors will evaluate the use of EBP when reviewing sampled residents for whom EBP are indicated and focus their evaluation of EBP use as it relates to CDC-targeted MDROs.

CMS will update associated survey documents which will be found under the "[Survey Resources](#)" link in the Downloads Section of the CMS Nursing Homes webpage and will also be added to the Long-Term Care Survey Process software application.

Contact:

For questions or concerns relating to this memorandum, please contact DNH_TriageTeam@cms.hhs.gov.

Effective Date: April 1, 2024.

/s/

David R. Wright

Director, Quality, Safety & Oversight Group

Resources to Improve Quality of Care:

Check out CMS's new Quality in Focus interactive video series. The series of 10–15 minute videos are tailored to specific provider types and intended to reduce the deficiencies most commonly cited during the CMS survey process, like infection control and accident prevention. Reducing these common deficiencies increases the quality of care for people with Medicare and Medicaid.

Learn to:

- *Understand surveyor evaluation criteria*
- *Recognize deficiencies*
- *Incorporate solutions into your facility's standards of care*

See the [Quality, Safety, & Education Portal Training Catalog](#), and select Quality in Focus.