

Human Waste (Feces) Management

Note: This information was developed by Infection Prevention and Control Human Waste Management Working Group. This document covers infection prevention and control measures only and does not cover operational issues such as cost, plumbing or waste management requirements, responsibility for purchase, or assignment of responsibility.

Terms in bold are defined in the **Definitions** section.

If you have any questions or comments contact IPC at ipcsurvstdadmin@ahs.ca.

Best practice recommendations

1. Background

- 1.1 The only human waste discussed in this information sheet is feces.
- 1.2 Feces is to be handled using routine practices including [point-of-care risk assessment](#), [personal protective equipment](#) and hand hygiene as human waste is potentially infectious.

2. Management of feces in the patient room/space

- 2.1 Do not empty human waste containers or dispose of feces into patient toilets in either shared or private rooms.
- 2.2 Disposing of feces into patient toilet is high risk for splashing, spraying and contamination of the bathroom.
- 2.3 Do not empty or rinse human waste containers/bedpans in patient sinks or hand hygiene sinks. (Refer to Section 5 Disposal of feces for alternatives.)

3. Minimizing transportation and risk of spilling feces

Use one of the following options:

- 3.1 Solidify contents of human waste containers prior to disposal into regular garbage following commercial solidifying product directions.
- 3.2 Use disposable human waste containers that can go into regular garbage without emptying (place into plastic bag first to contain contents and odors).
- 3.3 Use human waste containers liners or bags (with integrated solidifiers) to contain waste and reduce overall contamination of bedpans/commode pans and dispose into regular garbage.
- 3.4 When possible, position portable commode over the toilet during use.

4. Transporting human waste containers

- 4.1 Use a pre-determined route considering the shortest, most direct access to the dirty utility room or location of the **human waste management system** avoiding food preparation and serving areas, medication rooms and sterile storage areas.
- 4.2 Cover human waste containers with a blue pad, hygienic bag products, paper sleeves or covers intended for human waste containers.
 - Covering human waste containers reduces the need for additional personal protective equipment during transport.
 - If personal protective equipment is required during transport of waste containers, it should be worn from the patient room or space directly to the soiled utility room then discarded.
- 4.3 Clean spills of feces quickly and thoroughly following facility protocols and using facility approved products.

For more information contact
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5. Disposal of feces

- 5.1 Use an accepted human waste management system such as bedpan **washer/disinfectors**, **macerators**, **single-use** disposable bag systems or manual cleaning.
- Commercial dishwashers are not acceptable for cleaning and sanitizing human waste containers.
- 5.2 Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation, use and maintenance of the human waste management system. Regularly verify and document the equipment's operational settings, e.g., time, temperature and disinfectant, and regularly test washer/disinfectant performance.
- 5.3 Develop a facility process for disposal of feces in the event of a loss of water, power or system malfunction for sites using washer/disinfectors, macerators and other automatic systems.
- 5.4 Manual bedpan/commode pan cleaning methods is the least recommended human waste disposal system as manual cleaning creates splashes and sprays, exposing staff to contaminated aerosols, and contaminating the environment.
- 5.5 If using a manual disposal system such as hoppers:
- Equip the hopper with lids or other structures to contain droplets and possible aerosols during flushing to reduce the risk of environmental contamination.
 - Wear personal protective equipment as indicated by the point of care risk assessment, e.g., gloves, gown, mask, eye protection, to reduce the risk of exposure to splashing/spraying.
 - Do not use spray wands for rinsing human waste containers. Spraying contributes to personnel and environmental contamination.
- 5.6 Patients receiving hazardous medication should have their feces and emesis disposal assessed using Hazardous Medication documents available on AHS Insite: [Hazardous Medication Handling](#).

6. Human waste containers management

- 6.1 Following use, human waste containers which are:
- single-use or disposable must be discarded after each use.
 - **single-patient use** must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning single-patient use human waste containers. Discard single-patient use human waste containers on patient discharge or transfer or if they are stained, distorted, cracked or chipped.
 - **reusable** must be cleaned and disinfected after each use and in between use with different patients. The location and department responsible for disinfection will vary depending on site resources, for example on-site MDR or unit-based washer-disinfectors, following manufacturer's instructions. Discard reusable human waste containers if they are stained, distorted, cracked or chipped.
- 6.2 Store human waste containers, intended for reuse by same patient, separately from clean supplies, food and patient personal items. Routinely clean designated areas where single-patient use human waste containers are stored.

Definitions


Human waste containers are disposable or reusable receptacles used to collect feces. These include bedpan/commode hats, diapers, incontinence products, basins, ileostomy or colostomy bags.

Human waste management system is equipment or methods for human waste disposal requiring no manual cleaning of waste containers.

Macerator is a closed, plumbed-in waste disposal system to dispose of human waste. Macerators grind the disposable, bio-degradable bedpans, urinals, or emesis basins made of pulp into fine pieces and discharge into general sewage. A natural wax is used during production of the pulp paper items to prevent leakage and prevent absorption of liquids to allow precise measurement. The disposable pulp paper bedpans are used over a reusable plastic base for stability

Reusable any product or medical device intended by the manufacturer for multiple uses.

Single-use is equipment designated by the manufacturer to be use once and may be indicated by, but **not** limited to, the following terms used for labelling by the manufacturer:

- disposable; consumable; not for reuse or do not reuse; discard after Single-Use; do not use twice; or a symbol such as: 

Single-patient use means a medical device that is designated by its manufacturer for use and reuse on a single patient, but may not be reused on another patient.

Washer/disinfector is a closed waste management system designed to empty, clean, rinse and disinfect reusable urinals, bedpans and accessories.