

**Subject/Title:****Use of Tabletop Water Fountains in Continuing Care Facilities and Palliative Care Rooms**

Number:

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

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This Best Practice Guideline aims to minimize the risk of airborne organisms in low to medium risk patient/resident care groups when using tabletop water fountains.

Tabletop water fountains may provide comfort, relieve pain and stress for residents, provide an aesthetically pleasing environment, and increase resident satisfaction with quality of care.

Outbreaks of waterborne diseases have been associated with the use of water fountains. Inhalation of contaminated water sources can lead to severe and potentially life threatening pneumonias. All residents are at risk. Residents with underlying respiratory issues or those that smoke tobacco are at a higher risk.

**APPLICABILITY**

This guideline applies to all healthcare settings, except home living, and to all Alberta Health Services (AHS) employees, students, volunteers and other persons acting on behalf of AHS.

**BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE**

Literature states that decorative water fountains may be therapeutic for some patient's therapies. There needs to be a balance between the therapeutic impact and the risk of adding waterborne pathogens to the environment. IPC does not recommend the use of tabletop water fountains in patient care areas. In acute care, consult IPC as special considerations may be approved for palliative care rooms. In continuing care, adhere to this best practice guideline to reduce risks during use.

In the case of an outbreak, water fountains may be discontinued. Consult the outbreak management team for direction.

If a resident requests a tabletop water fountain these are the IPC expectations:

- Ensure the patient resides in a private room. If this is not possible, perform a risk assessment in consultation with IPC.
- If the patient/resident has a respiratory illness, discontinue use of the water fountain.
- Ensure the fountain does not use submerged lighting.
- Do not allow the water to sit stagnant in the fountain for any length of time.
- To discontinue the use of the fountain, drain all water and store in a clean area. To re-start using the fountain, clean and disinfect prior to first use.
- Obtain the name of an individual (e.g. family member, resident, volunteer or paid companion) who will perform and document the weekly cleaning and disinfection of the water fountain.

This individual must ensure:

- the manufacturer's cleaning instructions are adhered to
- fountain is drained weekly
- soap, water and friction are being used to clean the fountain
- a facility provided disinfectant is being used correctly (i.e. contact time, concentration of cleaning solution)
- the water fountain is filled with cool to cold sterile or distilled water

## REFERENCES

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