

# Selection and use of Gloves for Obstetrical and Gynecological Procedures

## Best practice recommendations

### Purpose

To outline the selection and use of sterile and non-sterile gloves for obstetrical and gynecological care and procedures and prevent the transmission of infection to the patient, newborn and staff.

### 1 Application

This recommendation should be followed by all Alberta Health Services (AHS) staff, medical staff, volunteers, students and other persons acting on behalf of AHS.

### 2 IPC Practices

[Routine practices](#) are used at all times, e.g., [infection prevention and control risk assessment](#), [hand hygiene](#) and [personal protective equipment](#), e.g., gloves. See Table 1 below. Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks, gown, and eye protection may be required when indicated by an Infection Prevention and Control risk assessment (IPC RA) to prevent transmission of specific organisms or infections that may not be fully prevented by routine practices. Hand hygiene is performed before gloves are put on and after gloves are removed. Hands can become contaminated during glove use, removal or by glove defects. Gloves are worn:

- To reduce the transmission of microorganisms from one patient to another or from one body site to another
- To reduce the risk of exposure to blood, body fluids, secretions and excretions
- When handling visibly or potentially soiled items.

## 3 Recommendations

Table 1: Use of sterile and non-sterile gloves

<p>Gloves are not required for routine patient care activities in which contact is limited to a patient's intact skin. For example, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting mother to breastfeed</li> <li>Taking blood pressure</li> <li>Temperature and pulse</li> <li>Performing injections</li> <li>Transporting patients</li> <li>Vascular line manipulation in absence of blood leakage</li> <li>Giving oral medications</li> <li>Distributing or collecting patient dietary trays</li> </ul>	<p>Clean, non-sterile gloves are required for contact with mucous membranes, non-intact skin and when risk of exposure to blood and body fluids. For example, but not limited to:</p> <p><b>Contact with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breast milk</li> <li>Vaginal secretions</li> <li>Meconium</li> <li>Amniotic fluid</li> <li>Placenta</li> </ul> <p><b>For procedures such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changing diapers</li> <li>Handling the newborn before the first bath.</li> <li>IV insertion and removal</li> <li>Drawing blood</li> <li>Discontinuation of IV line</li> </ul>	<p>Sterile gloves and aseptic technique are used for invasive procedures and contact with sterile sites. For example, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surgical procedure(s)</li> <li>Vaginal delivery</li> <li>Invasive radiologic procedure</li> <li>Performing vascular access (central lines)</li> <li>Vaginal exams during labor</li> <li>Rupture of membranes</li> <li>Cervical cerclage</li> <li>Trans-vaginal ultrasound</li> <li>Internal monitoring</li> <li>Colposcopy</li> <li>Endometrial biopsies</li> <li>Polyp removals</li> <li>Amniocentesis</li> <li>Chorionic villus sampling</li> <li>Use of forceps during delivery</li> <li>Spinal or epidural anesthetic (caps, masks, sterile gloves)</li> <li>Urinary catheter insertion</li> </ul>
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## 4 Definitions

**Aseptic or Sterile Technique** means the purposeful prevention of transfer of microorganisms from the patient's body surface to a normally sterile body site or from one person to another by keeping the microbe count to an irreducible minimum. Aseptic techniques, sometimes referred to as sterile techniques, are measures designed to render the patient's skin, supplies and surfaces maximally free from microorganisms. Such practices are used when performing procedures that expose the patient's normally sterile sites (e.g., intravascular system, spinal canal, subdural space, urinary tract) in such a manner as to keep them free from microorganisms. Components of aseptic technique prior to a procedure may involve the following: preparing the patient's skin with an antiseptic; hand hygiene, preferably with ABHR or, if not accessible, an antimicrobial soap; sterile gloves, gowns, masks, equipment, and drapes; and maintaining a sterile field.

**Infection Prevention Control Risk Assessment (IPC RA)** means the healthcare worker evaluation of the likelihood of exposure to an infectious agent, for a specific interaction with a specific patient in a specific environment. The healthcare worker makes decisions such as patient room placement and choice of personal protective equipment based on the IPC RA.

**Routine practices** means the infection prevention and control measures used in the care of all patients at all times to minimize or prevent healthcare-associated infections in the healthcare setting.

## 5 References

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6 Version history

IPC Document no./ID <i>(file name)</i> if-hp-ipc-guideline-glove-use		Revision Description/Comment <i>(Brief description of issue purpose, e.g., Issued for information, Minor change / Major change with applicable details)</i>
Version	Revision date <i>(YYYY-MM-DD)</i>	
V5	2025-05-08	Minor change. BPR revised to reflect AHS Branding 2024 and IPC Visual Identity formatting updates.
V6	2025-05-21	Minor change, link updates



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