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COVID-19:
Guidance for Health Care Providers & Facilities

How to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic

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Learning Objectives

Prevention & detection

Adopting best practices to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 into the facility. Preventing the spread of infection within a facility.

Caring for patients & residents

Receiving and caring for patients and residents with COVID-19 in the facility. Implementing an effective protocol for all personnel to follow.

Situation Update

March 11, 2020: World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic

- Elderly facility residents with chronic conditions are at a higher risk for death and severe illness from COVID-19

- Post-acute care facilities must prepare to safely care for any individuals with suspected or confirmed COVID-19

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COVID-19 Risk in Facilities

Health care providers and visitors have the highest probability of introducing COVID-19 into the facility.

Spreading can occur between health care providers, residents of the facility, and visitors.

Actions to take:

- **Implement visitor restrictions**
- **Enforce sick leave policies for health care providers**

Screening & Restricting Visitors

Screen visitors for signs of respiratory infection (fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath). Also, investigate any known contact with a person who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19.

Ask about international travel within the last 14 days to China, Iran, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Spain, France, U.K., and other areas identified by CDC as widespread ongoing transmission.

Post signs letting visitors know they should not enter unless they have been screened. **Click here to use the sign we've created** for your convenience.

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Curving In-Person Visits

01

Offer alternative means of communication like phone or video-communication to family members and loved ones that want to visit.

02

Create a phone line with a regularly updated voice recording. You can include information about operating status and when resuming in-person visits is safe.

Guidelines for Visitors

If visitors are able to enter the facility under special circumstances, it's important to adequately educate them. ALL visitors should be instructed to:

- Perform hand hygiene before entering the facility and any room.
- Follow respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette
  - Avoid touching surfaces and face
  - Avoid common areas and limit movement throughout the facility
  - Use recommended personal protective equipment (PPE)

Important: Post clear and visible signs for hand hygiene and cough etiquette throughout the facility.

Click here to use the poster we've created.

Guidelines for Healthcare Personnel

Adhere to infection prevention and control measures:

- Hand Hygiene
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE)
- All health care providers to demonstrate competency with using PPE
- Facility-based and consultant personnel to adhere to all policies

Healthcare personnel should NOT report to work if they show signs of illness

- Health care providers must report any symptoms to their supervisor and the person in charge of occupational health at the facility
- Sick leave policies are to be non-punitive, flexible, and should align with public health reccomendations

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Detecting COVID-19 in Your Facility

Frequent monitoring of residents and health care providers should become common to help identify:

- Residents with new or worsening respiratory symptoms
- Health care providers with new-onset of respiratory symptoms

- **Report to local public health authorities if there are clusters of symptomatic residents in your facility**

- **Track suspected and confirmed respiratory infections**

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Identify Staff & Space

01

Identify a seperate area that can be used to properly segment residents into cohorts of confirmed COVID-19 cases (e.g. placing them in the same wing, unit, or building).

02

Identify a minimum number of health care providers dedicated to care for residents with COVID-19 and train designated staff with appropriate PPE and protocols.

Infection Control Supplies

- Make hand hygiene easily accessible across the entire facility - place alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with >60% alcohol) inside and outside of resident rooms, in care areas, and in common shared areas.
- Confirm all sinks are functional and stocked with soap & paper towels.
- Personal protective equipment such as N95 respirators, goggles, gowns, and gloves should be made available for all health care providers.

Resident/Patient Movement

- Suspend large group activities or gatherings and temporarily close communal dining areas

- If a patient/resident must leave their room, they should be provider with a facemask

- Restrict residents with a fever or acute respiratory symptom to their room or unit

- Before transferring a resident with an acute respiratory illness or COVID-19, ensure the facility has been notified

Efficacy of Hand Hygiene Products

Good   Better   Best

Plain Soap   Antimicrobial Soap   **Alcohol-based handrub***
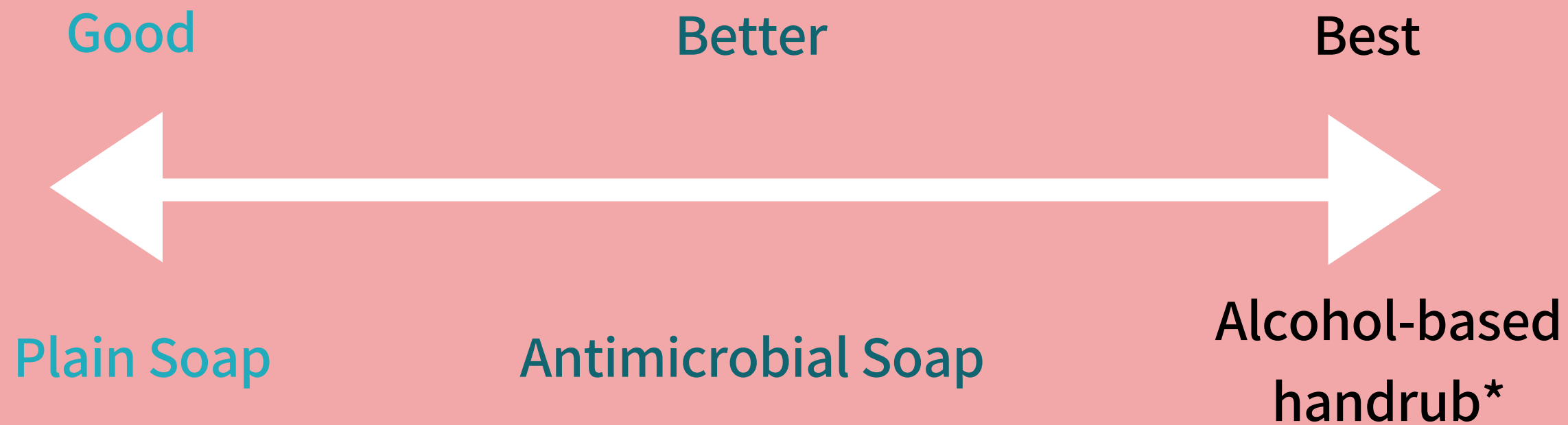
*Less effective in presence of organic material

- Use alcohol-based hand rub if hands are not visibly soiled
- Wash hands with soap and water when hands are visibly soiled

Resources

- For more information, see CDC guidance for long-term care facilities: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/prevent-spread-in-long-term-care-facilities.html
- For more information, see CDC guidance for Healthcare Facilities: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html
- For general infection control training resources: https://www.cdc.gov/longtermcare/
- For Home Health Agency information from CMS: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-18-hha.pdf
- For Hospital information from CMS, visit: https://www.cms.gov/files/document/qso-20-13-hospitalspdf.pdf-2