

Clean Bag Technique

REFERENCE

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BACKGROUND

The healthcare bag has been utilized by home care staff to carry pertinent items to give appropriate client care. The bag is utilized from patient home to home and becomes a vector for carrying and transmitting unwarranted microorganisms. A study by Bakunas-Kennely and Madigan (2009) showed that 84% of the outside of the bags cultured positively for human pathogens and 48.4% for positive cultures inside the bag. Thus shows the potential for transmission of infection via bags and predicates the importance of proper clean bag technique to prevent contamination and transmission.

PROCEDURE

- A. When to clean bag
 - a. Decontaminating your bag is important to reduce “bioburden” and to prevent bacteria load during patient encounters
 - b. Agency suggests that the bag be cleaned and decontaminated
 - i. Exterior - minimally on a weekly basis
 - ii. Interior –monthly
 - iii. When visibly soiled
 - iv. May have been exposed to human pathogens e.g. COVID-19, MRSA, MDRO's.
 - c. Agency recommends on cleaning days to also check medical supplies that are damaged or expired and to discard/ replace as needed
- B. Process for cleaning your bag
 - a. Agency recommends following McGoldrick (2014) procedure for Decontaminating and Cleaning the Nursing Bag as outlined below:

- i. Select a large surface area that is suitable for cleaning and disinfecting (i.e., nonwood surface) the interior and exterior of the bag and emptying the bag's contents.
- ii. Clean and disinfect the selected surface with a disinfectant and allow the surface to remain wet for the contact time recommended by the manufacturer for a low-level disinfection.
- iii. Place the nursing bag on the cleaned surface.
- iv. Remove all contents from the interior of the bag and place the contents on the cleaned surface.
- v. Turn the bag upside down and shake the bag to remove any loose contents in a trash container.
- vi. Visually inspect the interior and exterior of the bag for tears, cracks, and excess wear, and replace the bag as needed.
- vii. Hand wipe the nursing bag's interior surfaces with a "moist" disinfectant wipe wearing gloves (if recommended by the manufacturer) to remove any surface dirt adhering to the interior of the bag. Allow the bag's interior surfaces to remain wet for the contact time recommended by the manufacturer for a low-level disinfection.
- viii. Remove any surface dirt adhering to the exterior of the nursing bag by:
 1. Hand wiping the rolling or hand-carried bag's exterior surfaces with a "moist" disinfectant wipe for the contact time recommended by the manufacturer for low-level disinfection; or
 2. Machine washing the hand-carried bag (i.e., duffel-style bag) in a washing machine and drying in a dryer or allowing it to air dry.
- ix. Clean and disinfect the vital sign equipment (i.e., stethoscope, thermometer, pulse oximeter, sphygmomanometer) and electronic equipment used during patient care (i.e., laptop computer, cell phone). Allow the surface to remain wet for the contact time recommended by the manufacturer for a low-level disinfection.
- x. Remove the gloves and perform hand hygiene.
- xi. Check the expiration dates on all medical supplies, blood tubes, and hand hygiene products, and discard as needed. Replace the supplies back into the cleaned nursing bag.
- xii. Check the supply stock to assure that all necessary equipment, supplies, and hand hygiene products are available and restock the bag's contents as needed.
- xiii. Replace vital sign equipment into the nursing bag.

C. Selecting type of bag

- a. Agency recommends selecting a bag with a surface that is nonporous, noncloth/ canvas/ fabric material (e.g., vinyl or leather)
 - i. Only a hard non-porous surface can be disinfected by wiping the surface
- b. Agency recommends that bag should be replaced when it becomes worn and/ or does not present with a clean, "professional" appearance

D. Recommended Bag Technique

- a. Agency recommends the following general guidelines for keeping your bag clean:
 - i. Keep bag closed until you are ready to utilize the items inside
 - ii. Before opening bag, think through the steps you will take to provide the best client care to prevent going back into the bag to take things out
 - iii. Perform proper hand sanitization or hand hygiene prior to opening bag
 - iv. Disinfect reusable items before reinsertion to bag
 - v. Keep bag closed when not in use to prevent bed bugs, insects, or children from entering bag
 - vi. If no clean, dry surface exists to place bag, may hang bag on doorknob or on back of heavy chair
 - b. Agency recommends following McGoldrick (2009) procedure for bag technique as outlined below:
 - i. Place the hand-carried bag on a clean, dry surface or keep the rolling bag on the floor
 - ii. Perform hand hygiene
 - iii. Remove the supplies from the bag and place on a clean, dry surface area or on a surface barrier as needed
 - iv. Do not reenter the bag with gloves on. Remove the gloves if worn, perform hand hygiene, and then reenter the bag
 - v. Clean the equipment and supplies that had direct patient or environmental contact as needed
 - vi. Remove PPE if worn, and perform hand hygiene
 - c. Surface Barrier is an item placed beneath the nursing bag in the patient's home to prevent contaminating the surface of the nursing bag
 - i. Recommended that materials such as newspapers and paper towels not be utilized because the material can wick water from environment causing possible transmission or leakage onto bag surface
 - 1. Suggested and ideal surface barriers under a nursing bag include:
 - a. Plastic bag (tall kitchen size) on a roll
 - b. Waterproof changing table liner
 - c. Wax paper, sheet pan/ cafeteria tray liner
 - d. Poly-backed towels
 - 2. Re-usable surface barriers that antimicrobial are not a substitute for cleaning maintenance of your bag
 - ii. Surface barriers need to be larger than bag and may have to accommodate for front flaps/ shoulder straps that may touch floor
- E. Recommended general guidelines for organizing your bag
- a. Only clean items should be in bag.
 - b. Hand hygiene items like hand sanitizer is recommended in the exterior compartment
 - c. Divided bag into Single-use items and reusable items
 - i. Single use items may include individually packaged disinfectant wipes, alcohol prep pads, wound care dressing supplies, paper drying materials to use after washing hands, and PPE
 - 1. Minimal quantities of PPE should be stored in nursing bag.

- ii. Re-usable items may include items needed to obtain patient's vital signs and bandage scissors
- d. Red biohazard bags or regulated medical waste should be hand carried and not place in bag
- e. If in-use sharps container is needed, it is recommended the container be in the exterior compartment of the bag. Note – always discard sharps container as it meets 2/3's full

F. Recommended Bag placement in vehicle

- a. Place items in a visibly clean, dry surface in the vehicle
- b. Place items in temperature-controlled section of the vehicle rather than the trunk
- c. Recommended to place bag into a large plastic container with high sides (this prevents bed bugs from crawling out)
 - i. Recommendation would be two supply containers – clean and dirty
 - 1. Clean container may include:
 - a. Supply Bag
 - b. Disposable client care supplies (such as boxes of gloves, personal protective equipment, catheter kits, and irrigation fluids)
 - 2. Dirty Supply Container may include:
 - a. Sharps container
 - b. Lab transport bag
 - c. Items that will need to be cleaned
 - ii. Recommended to clean supply containers at a minimum of a monthly basis

G. Discretions of when not to bring nursing bag in home

- a. The following scenarios are recommendations of when not to bring nursing bag into the home
 - i. Known to be colonized with MDRO (e.g MRSA) or C. difficile
 - ii. On Contact precautions, in addition to standard precautions
 - iii. Home is infested with bed bugs or other pests
 - iv. Home is grossly contaminated with soil or excrement
 - v. Staff member's judgment that bag is likely to be contaminated or soiled
- b. If the aforementioned do apply, the nurse may opt to not bring nursing bag in home.
 - i. Nurse may utilize disposable, single patient use supplies and left in the home.
 - ii. Educate patient on having own dedicated equipment that staff may use such as those for monitoring vital signs
 - iii. If the bag does not enter the home, it is recommended to have at the minimum a disposable bag for bringing pertinent items inside the home coupled with a surface barrier.