

TAG F441 / INFECTION CONTROL REQUIREMENTS FOR BLOOD GLUCOSE MONITORING

What is the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Tag F441?

Tag F441 is an interpretive guideline for infection control programs in Long Term Care facilities. It is put in place to prevent, recognize, and control the onset and spread of infection. Tag F441 is used for guidance by CMS Regional Offices and State Survey Agencies for (re-)certification and complaint investigations.

Does Tag F441 only apply to blood glucose meters?

No, F Tag 441 applies to all resident care equipment and environmental surfaces, including blood glucose meters.

Why is Cleaning and Disinfecting of blood glucose meters such a high priority?

Blood glucose meters are at high risk of becoming contaminated with bloodborne pathogens such as Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), Hepatitis C Virus (HCV), and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Transmission of these viruses from resident to resident has been documented due to contaminated blood glucose devices. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cleaning and disinfecting of meters between resident use can prevent the transmission of these viruses through indirect contact.

How often do blood glucose meters need to be cleaned and disinfected?

Per CMS Tag F441 Transmittal 55 dated December 2, 2009, blood glucose meters need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use for individual resident care. Lancets for obtaining a blood sample need to be properly disposed of after one use.

What is the procedure to wiping down a meter?

Remove a wipe from container and follow product label instructions to disinfect the meter. If the wipe is dripping wet, excess liquid should be squeezed out. Take extreme care not to get liquid in the test strip and key code ports of the meter. Each wipe will list a contact time. This is the total time needed for the disinfectant solution to remain wet on the surface of the product to achieve disinfection of all the stated efficacy kill claims. It is not advised to wrap the meter in a wipe; instead wipe the meter down as shown below.



If a blood glucose meter is assigned to an individual resident and not shared, does it still need to be cleaned and disinfected?

CMS states that blood glucose meters need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use, so it is our interpretation that yes, individually assigned meters need to be cleaned and disinfected. Each meter in use is subject to QC testing per the facility's policy.

What can be used to clean a blood glucose meter?

Cleaning can be accomplished by wiping the meter down with soap and water or isopropyl alcohol. These will not disinfect a meter.

What can be used to disinfect a blood glucose meter?

Disinfecting can be accomplished with an EPA registered disinfectant detergent or germicide that is approved for healthcare settings. ARKRAY recommends using a 1:10 concentration of sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or the Super Sani-Cloth® Germicidal Disposable Wipe, a pre-moistened towelette manufactured by Professional Disposables International, Inc.

Can cleaning and disinfecting be accomplished with one wipe?

The Super Sani-Cloth® Germicidal Disposable Wipe, acts as both a cleaner and disinfectant, though if blood is visibly present on the meter, two wipes must be used; one wipe to clean and a second wipe to disinfect.

What will happen if a blood glucose meter is not cleaned and disinfected after use?

Per the CMS Tag 441 guideline, surveyors may issue a citation/IJ if they observe no cleaning and disinfecting of meters after a blood glucose test as they would not be in compliance with CMS Tag F441.

It is important that a LTC facility establish a program for infection control and identify a key individual responsible for the overall program oversight. The program should include addressing the cleaning and disinfection of blood glucose meters along with other equipment and environmental surfaces. The program should involve establishing goals and priorities, planning, strategy implementation, post-surveillance, and more. Additionally staff's roles and responsibilities should be identified and training documented. It is also important to provide education on infection control and the proper use of products. More information on establishing a comprehensive infection prevention and control program can be found in the CMS Infection Control Guidance Document.

More information on CMS Tag F441 is available at <http://www.cms/hhs.gov/Transmittals/>

For more information on the PDI wipes, visit www.pdipdi.com or contact 800.999.6423.

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