

THE Guardian™

LTC Professionals Newsletter

F-Tag 441: Infection Control

Healthcare is such an important aspect in people's quality of life. It is meant to heal and help people stay healthy. But anytime you bring many people together - healthy or ill - it can be hazardous. In LTC facilities, infection control is as important for residents as it is for healthcare workers. F-Tag 441 states that a facility must establish and maintain an infection control program designed to provide a safe, sanitary, and comfortable environment and to help prevent the development and transmission of disease and infection. Established infection control programs must cover three aspects: 1.) preventing, identifying, and containing infections in the facility, 2.) determining what protocols must be carried out with individual residents, and 3.) documenting incidents and corrective actions.

The intent of F-Tag 441 is to make certain each facility has an effective program in place to investigate the cause of infection, control the spread of infections, and prevent new infections from occurring. Generally, a deeper investigation of a facility's infection control program will only occur if unsatisfactory signs are found

first. Your infection control program should be in writing and evaluated regularly.

Contact your state health department for guidance on establishing a program as the scope can be extensive. They can provide you with current industry standards and best practices. Your program should include procedures for everything from early diagnoses for TB to sanitation of tubs to staff training on infection control.

While a written infection control program is essential, here are some day-to-day steps you can take that will help meet state requirements:

- » If a resident has an infection, be sure to document when it began, what caused it, and what steps you have taken to prevent spreading within the facility.
- » Make sure everyone on staff is wearing gloves whenever needed.
- » Sanitize multiple use equipment, especially blood glucose meters, according to the manufacturers recommendations. If you are unsure of what these are, contact your manufacturer representative to have the information sent to you.
- » Train new staff and refresh all staff

on infection control procedures and practices. Consistency across the board is important.

Your infection control policies will be reviewed if any aspect of infection control practice is observed as an issue.

Diabetes care can be a hot button for F-Tag 441 as blood regularly comes into play. Wear gloves while performing blood glucose tests.

Remember to use single use lancets with a lockout feature and dispose of them properly in sharps containers. Use meters specifically designed for multi-resident use. Disinfect meters in between use on each resident. If you have any questions or concerns regarding infection control as it relates to your diabetes management program, contact your ARKRAY Assure® representative for a consultation on how to improve practices at your facility by calling 800.818.8877.

For more information and for the source of this article please visit:

http://cms.hhs.gov/manuals/Downloads/som107ap_pp_guidelines_ltf.pdf

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