**March 27, 2020 DRAFT – COVID-19 Home Life and Personal Concerns for Health Care Workers – Surfaces and Clothing**

Staff have expressed concerns about exposing family members to infection through their clothing and personal items. The following guidelines were developed to address them:

**Clothing and other soft surfaces:**

* Sars-CoV-2 can be viable on softer surfaces e.g., dry cardboard, dry cloth: usually minutes to hours, shorter when dried.
* Machine-washable clothing is readily disinfected by detergent and water of *any* temperature (need not be hot).
* Note that contamination of personal clothing is prevented through rigorous use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)during clinical care of a suspected or proven COVID-19 patient.
* In addition to PPE, you can avoid contamination of clothing by:
  + Following the 4 moments of Hand Hygiene (HH) during patient care.
  + Performing HH with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub after using the bathroom, contact with high touch surfaces (eg. elevator buttons, door knobs, handrails etc.) or any other contaminated objects (link to AHS video),
  + Avoid wearing any watches, bracelets, or or hand jewelry that could compromise the effectiveness of hand hygiene
  + Maintaining physical distancing from other,
  + Ensuring that you do not lean up against walls, countertops, furniture, patient beds/cribs, or medical equipment.
* Preferentially wear clothes that are readily machine-washable with water and laundry detergent; avoid dry-cleaning or hand washing.

**If you DO NOT provide direct clinical care or work in a clinical care area use standard social distancing precautions**

* + Wash your hands frequently,
  + Maintain physical distancing from others in work areas and public spaces.

**If there is a breach in PPE or practices during clinical care, or if you are worried regardless:**

* Change your clothes before you leave the hospital /workplace, or once you arrive at home.
* Whether you wear your own scrubs or regular clothes, change your clothes at the end of a clinical day, either at the hospital or other facility, or once you arrive at home.
* If you change at work or outside your home, transport the clothes you have changed out of into a disposable plastic bag. When you arrive home, leave your shoes outside your home (and clean as for hard surfaces, below) and empty the clothes directly into your washing machine. It is fine to add other clothes also.
* Wash your clothes with detergent and any temperature of water. Any virus will have been killed by the time you remove your still damp clothes from the washer. Use dryer or hang to dry as you usually would.

**Hard surfaces, including medical accessories**

* Sars-CoV-2 is viable on hard surfaces (e.g., stainless steel, plastic, glass) for hours to several days.
* Clean medical and personal accessories using disinfectant wipes including:
  + Stethoscopes between patients (and minimize use of stethoscope unless clinically necessary),
  + Pager and cell phone regularly during day,
  + Nametag – clip-on preferred, cloth lanyards are not easily cleaned.
* Hard surfaces are readily cleaned by wiping visible grime away using cleaning cloths or paper towels with soap and water.
* Surfaces can then be disinfected using most household cleaning agents (see box).

**References**

* AHS Donning and Doffing: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/Page6422.aspx>
* Persistence of SARS-CoV-2 and other related viruses on surfaces: van Doremalen et al. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2004973;   
  Kampf et al DOI.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2020.01.022; Lai et al. DOI: [10.1086/433186](https://doi.org/10.1086/433186)
* Use cold or hot water: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-handwashing.html>

**Household Products for Disinfection:**

* Bleach (0.5% sodium hypochlorite; dilute regular bleach 1 part bleach:10 parts water).
* Benzalkonium chloride (Lysol, Mr. Clean, Vim, etc antibacterial products)
* Hydrogen peroxide
* >70% alcohol