

Avoiding Infection While Using Home Medical Supplies

Wash Your Hands

The single most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection is to wash your hands. It is recommended that you wash your hands before and after handling your medical supplies.

1. Wash your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if possible.
2. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds.
3. Rinse hands well under running water and dry with a paper towel.
4. Use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.



If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer gel to clean hands. Apply the product to the palm of one hand; rub hands together, and continue rubbing the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

Testing your blood glucose at home

1. Wash your hands before and after handling your supplies.
2. Check your user's manual for specific information.
3. It is important to use a new lancet each time you test your blood and to throw away used lancets in a puncture-resistant container.



4. Do not share your lancing device with others.
5. Dispose of used test strips in a trash bag or as directed by your physician.
6. Once a vial or package of test strips has been opened, they will usually expire in 90 - 120 days.
7. Do not use expired test strips.
8. Keep your test strips in a location away from extreme cold, heat or humidity.
9. It is a good idea to run control tests regularly to ensure your test strips are working properly.

Using urology supplies at home

1. Wash your hands before and after handling your supplies.
2. If you have a Foley or indwelling catheter and you experience leakage, contact your physician.
3. If you are using a male external catheter and are having difficulty keeping the catheter in place, be sure the skin is cleansed thoroughly before applying a new catheter. Residual adhesive can interfere with a new seal.



4. When using intermittent catheters, it is important to use the proper technique directed by your physician.
5. Cleansing of bedside and leg bags can be helped with the use of a commercial cleaner/decrystallizer and following manufacturer directions.

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Using ostomy supplies at home

1. Wash your hands before and after performing ostomy care.
2. Remove the used appliance and dispose of it in a trash bag or as directed by your physician.
3. Wash and rinse the stoma and skin around it as directed by your healthcare provider.
4. Check your skin for redness or sore areas and report any concerns to your physician.

Using wound care supplies at home

1. Wash your hands before and after handling your supplies.
2. Remove soiled dressings and dispose of them in a plastic trash bag or as directed by your physician.
3. Wash your hands again before touching the clean dressings.
4. Follow your physician's instructions concerning any cleansing or treatment of the wound.
5. Check for any signs of infection, such as redness and firmness of the skin around the wound, or an increase in pain or drainage. Other signs of infection include fever, loss of appetite and mental confusion, especially in the elderly.
6. Report any concerns to your physician. When handling the dressing supplies, try not to touch the part of the dressing that will have direct contact with the wound. If possible, only handle the dressing at the edges. Place the dressings onto the wound as directed by your physician.

