



# DEDER GENERAL HOSPITAL

## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Prevention of Healthcare-Associated Diarrhea (HCAD)

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## **1. Purpose**

To outline the standard procedures for preventing healthcare-associated diarrhea (HCAD), including but not limited to Clostridium difficile infection, viral gastroenteritis, and other enteric pathogens acquired in healthcare settings.

## **2. Scope**

This SOP applies to all healthcare workers in inpatient and outpatient care settings who are involved in patient care, environmental cleaning, food handling, or waste disposal.

## **3. Responsibilities**

- **Healthcare Workers:** Adhere strictly to hand hygiene, personal protective equipment (PPE) usage, and environmental protocols.
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Team:** Monitor compliance, provide training, and investigate outbreaks.
- **Housekeeping Staff:** Ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of patient areas and equipment.
- **Dietary Services:** Maintain food hygiene and safe storage practices.

## 4. Definitions

- ☒ **Healthcare-Associated Diarrhea (HCAD):** Diarrhea that occurs  $\geq 72$  hours after hospital admission, not present at the time of admission.
- ☒ **Contact Precautions:** IPC measures to prevent transmission via direct or indirect contact with infectious materials.

## 5. Procedures

### 5.1 Surveillance and Early Detection

- ☒ Monitor patients for new onset of diarrhea ( $\geq 3$  loose stools in 24 hours).
- ☒ Isolate symptomatic patients promptly.
- ☒ Notify IPC team for assessment and testing.

### 5.2 Hand Hygiene

- ☒ Perform hand hygiene with soap and water before and after patient contact.
- ☒ Alcohol-based hand rubs are not effective against *C. difficile* spores; soap and water is preferred.

### 5.3 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- ☒ Use gloves and gowns for all patient contact or handling of contaminated materials.

- Dispose of PPE appropriately and perform hand hygiene after removal.

#### 5.4 Environmental Cleaning

- Use sporicidal disinfectants for cleaning patient rooms, bathrooms, and frequently touched surfaces.
- Clean and disinfect shared medical equipment between patients.

#### 5.5 Patient Placement

- Place patients with HCAD in single rooms where possible.
- If cohorting is necessary, group patients with the same pathogen.

#### 5.6 Food and Water Safety

- Ensure safe food handling, preparation, and storage.
- Provide patients with safe drinking water.

#### 5.7 Waste Management

- Dispose of fecal-contaminated waste in accordance with infectious waste guidelines.
- Avoid manual emptying of bedpans—use bedpan washers where available.

## **5.8 Staff Education and Training**

- ☒ Train all staff on modes of transmission and preventive practices for HCAD.
- ☒ Conduct regular refresher courses and audits.

## **5.9 Visitor Precautions**

- ☒ Instruct visitors on hand hygiene and PPE if visiting affected patients.
- ☒ Limit visitor access during outbreaks.

## **6. Monitoring and Evaluation**

Conduct routine audits on hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, and compliance with contact precautions. Track incidence rates of healthcare-associated diarrhea and report trends.

## **7. References**

1. IPC Vol1 Reference Manual
2. WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care
3. CDC Guidelines for Isolation Precautions