

Expectorant shield use

Introduction

Wearing personal protective equipment is essential when exposure to blood or body fluids is anticipated. Wearing such equipment helps prevent the spread of certain types of infections. The expectorant shield, also known as a *face shield*, is a piece of personal protective equipment that's typically used in the psychiatric setting when a patient is known to (or is expected to) spit on health care workers. It's also used to prevent inadvertent splashes and to protect against microorganisms that may be expelled when the patient coughs, talks, or sneezes.

Equipment

- Gloves
- Expectorant shield

Implementation

- Gather the equipment before entering the patient's room.
- Explain to the patient why you're using personal protective equipment *to reduce the patient's anxiety*. Explain that precautions will be discontinued when possible.

Applying the shield

1. If your hair is long, pull it back and up using appropriate hair accessories before putting on the shield. *Long hair can catch and harbor bacteria and splashed materials.*
2. Locate the reinforced piece of the shield that fits over the nose (it's below the clear plastic piece).
3. Grasp the shield at the sides of the reinforced piece. *This technique prevents smudging of the clear piece that shields the eyes.*
4. Place the reinforced piece of the shield over the bridge of your nose. If you wear glasses, place your glasses above the reinforced piece *to prevent fogging of the glasses.*
5. Loop the shield's elastic bands over the ears one ear at a time. If the shield has strings, tie the top strings first and then the bottom strings.
6. Pull the low end of the shield underneath the chin. The shield should cover the entire face, with the clear portion shielding the eyes.
7. Put on clean gloves and provide patient care.

Nursing alert: If the expectorant shield becomes contaminated with blood or body fluids during patient care, remove it immediately and replace it with a clean shield. Don't wipe or wash the shield.

Removing the shield

1. All personal protective equipment should be removed at the patient's door.
2. If the face shield hasn't been soiled, remove your gloves and perform hand hygiene.
3. Remove the shield by taking the elastic off of each ear one at a time. If the shield has strings, untie the bottom strings first and then the top strings.
4. If the shield has been soiled, remove your gloves and perform hand hygiene. Then put on clean gloves and remove the shield as described above.
5. Dispose of the shield and gloves in an appropriate container.
6. Perform hand hygiene.
7. Document the procedure that required the use of the expectorant shield.¹¹

Documentation

- Document that an expectorant shield was used and why it was used.

References

1. The Joint Commission. *Comprehensive Accreditation Manual for Hospitals: The Official Handbook*. Standard RC.01.03.01. Oakbrook Terrace, Ill.: The Joint Commission, 2010.
2. Varcarolis, E.M., et al. *Foundations of Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing: A Clinical Approach*, 5th ed. St. Louis: Saunders, 2006.
3. Videbeck, S.L. *Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing*, 4th ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007.

Expectorant shield use

1. Gather the equipment.
2. Explain to the patient why you're using personal protective equipment.

Applying the shield

1. If your hair is long, pull it back and up using appropriate hair accessories.
2. Locate the reinforced piece of the shield that fits over the nose.
3. Grasp the shield at the sides of the reinforced piece.
4. Place the reinforced piece of the shield over the bridge of your nose.
5. Loop the shield's elastic bands over the ears. If the shield has strings, tie the top strings first and then the bottom strings.
6. Pull the low end of the shield underneath the chin.
7. Put on clean gloves and provide patient care.

Removing the shield

1. If the face shield hasn't been soiled, remove your gloves and perform hand hygiene.
2. Remove the shield by taking the elastic off of each ear. If the shield has strings, untie the bottom strings first and then the top strings.
3. If the shield has been soiled, remove your gloves and perform hand hygiene. Then put on clean gloves and remove the shield as described above.
4. Dispose of the shield and gloves.
5. Perform hand hygiene.
6. Document the procedure.