**FECAVA Key Recommendations for Hygiene and Infection Control in Veterinary Practice**

**PREVENT INFECTION**
Effective implementation of hygienic measures is essential to prevent and contain the transmission of nosocomial infections to animals and humans both within veterinary settings and in the community.

**CLEAN AND DISINFECT HANDS**
The most important activity in the control of nosocomial infections in practice.

**WASH HANDS**
- At the start and end of the working day.
- After visiting the toilet.
- Before and after eating or smoking.
- When visibly soiled.
- After handling animal fluids and excretions.
- Before aseptic or invasive procedures in combination with disinfection.

**DISINFECT HANDS**
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (70-90%) if hands are dry and clean.
- Before and after handling each patient.
- Before and after gloving.
- Before touching equipment, door handles, light switches and telephones on a daily/regular basis.

**WASH HANDS**
- Before and after gloving.
- When handling all wounds.
- When contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions and mucous membranes is possible.
- During surgery or when asepsis is required (sterile gloves).
- Change gloves between each individual patient and when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Change gloves when moving from dirty to clean areas.
- Change gloves before touching equipment, door handles, light switches and telephones on a daily/regular basis.

**USE GLOVES**
- When handling diseased or carrier animals with known or suspected contagious diseases, including parasitic infestations.
- When handling animals with known or suspected antimicrobial resistant infections.
- When handling all wounds.
- When contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions and mucous membranes is possible.
- During surgery or when asepsis is required (sterile gloves).
- Change gloves between each individual patient and when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Change gloves when moving from dirty to clean areas.
- Change gloves before touching equipment, door handles, light switches and telephones on a daily/regular basis.

**Wear Protective Clothing**
To ensure that hands and forearms can be kept clean and that lab coats or scrubs should be worn at all times when handling patients. Protective clothing should not be worn outside the working environment.

**Additional Protective Clothing**
- Masks, hair caps, sterile gowns and gloves should be used for surgical and invasive procedures.
- Plastic aprons, gloves and masks are required when handling:
  - Patients with known or suspected contagious disease.
  - Potentially contaminated fluids and secretions.

**Change the Additional Protective clothing**
- Between patients.
- When moving between wards, isolation and intensive care units.

**Clean and Disinfect Premises**
Use approved cleaning products and sanitizers for veterinary premises and follow label instructions. Use gloves. For equipment, follow the recommendations from the manufacturers.

**Surfaces and Equipment**
- Clean and disinfect before and after each patient and when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Clean and disinfect door handles, keyboards, light switches and telephones on a daily/regular basis.

**Common Areas (entrances, reception, waiting rooms and corridors)**
- Clean and disinfect daily and when visibly soiled or contaminated.

**Wards, isolation and intensive care units**
- Clean and disinfect before and after each patient and when visibly soiled or contaminated.

**SURGICAL PREPARATION**
- The operating room must only be used for surgical procedures.
- Clip (don’t shave) surgical sites immediately before surgery in a separate area. Vacuum loose hair. Clean and disinfect clippers between each patient.
- Skin preparation after clipping using antibacterial soap with water followed by alcohol & chlorhexidine.
- Surgeon must scrub in with mild soap & alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-95%) according to practice protocols.
- Protective clothing (“scrubs”) must be used during surgery. Scrubs used in other areas must not be worn in the surgical ward.
- Only use sterilized instruments. Autoclave if possible.
- Cold sterilization only under exceptional circumstances.
- Prevent animal from licking, scratching or otherwise traumatizing the surgical site.
- Handle wounds and bandage changes with clean or aseptic technique.

**Laundry Clothing and bedding**
- Scrubs and lab coats - daily and when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Bedding and animal blankets - between each patient and when visibly soiled or contaminated.
- Laundry should be done on the premises or by a professional company.
- Remove any gross visible soiling contamination prior to washing (use gloves).
- Wash at 60°C and dry at high temperature to eliminate infectious organisms.
- Maintain clear separation between dirty and clean areas in laundry room to avoid cross-contamination.
- Store clean laundry in dedicated areas.

**Train Staff**
Train and encourage all staff to understand and comply with good hygiene practices. Correct hygiene is not difficult if everyone is aware of its importance.

- Develop written hygiene protocols (display prominently) and appoint a member of staff with responsibility for promoting and enforcing hygiene practices.
- Establish thorough in-house training of staff and encourage attendance at continuing education courses on hygiene.

**Educate Pet Owners**
Use printed documentation (leaflets, posters) & face to face communication.

- To ensure good hygiene practices during clinical visits and following contact with their animal in their homes.
- To support veterinary efforts in improving hygiene and responsible use of antimicrobials with good adherence to prescribed therapies.
- To convey better understanding of the public health implications of zoonotic and antimicrobial resistant infections in pets.