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**
Proper hand hygiene is key in the control of nosocomial infections in practice.

- **WASH**
  - Using water and pH friendly, non-medicated soap
  - At the start and end of the working day.
  - 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 (prEN 1500 Compliant)
  - That are dry and clean.
  - Before touching equipment, door handles and keyboards.

- **WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING**
  - Clean and disinfect before and after each patient.
  - Between patients.
  - When moving between wards, isolation and intensive care units.

- **CLEAN AND DISINFECT PREMISES**
  - Use approved cleaning products and disinfectants for veterinary premises.
  - For equipment, follow the recommendations from the manufacturers.

- **SURFACES AND EQUIPMENT**
  - Clean and disinfect daily and when visibly soiled or contaminated.
  - Clean and disinfect door handles, keyboards, light switches, phones, anaesthetic monitors on a daily / regular basis.

- **EDUCATE PET OWNERS**
  - To convey better understanding of the public health implications of zoonotic and antimicrobial resistant infections in pets.

**LAUNDER CLOTHING AND BEDDING**

- **Scrub 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.**

**USE GLOVES**

- **When handling diseased or carrier animals with known or suspected contagious disease, including parasitic infestations.**
- **When handling all wounds.**
- **When contact with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions and mucous membranes is possible.**
- **During surgery or when aspesis is required (double gloving during draping).**
- **Sterile gloves.**
- **Change gloves** between each individual patient and when visibly contaminated.
- **When moving from dirty to clean procedures on the same patient.**
- **Change gloves before touching equipment, door handles and keyboards.**

**SURGICAL PREPARATION**

- **Dedicated surgical area scrubs, caps and masks must be worn by all personnel in theatre.**
- **The operating room must only be used for surgical procedures.**
- **Clip (don’t shave) surgical sites just 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** before the actual disinfection is begun.
- **Skin disinfection after clipping using antibacterial soap with water followed by alcohol & chlorhexidine. Use gloves.**
- **1. Wash the surgical site until household clean with nonmedicated soap before the actual disinfection is begun.**
- **2. Disinfect the skin using antimicrobial soap with water, allow for appropriate contact time of minimally 3 minutes.**
- **3. Rinse or wipe with alcohol or alcohol with active ingredients.**
- **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.**

**TRAIN ALL STAFF / TRIAGE STAFF**

- **Train 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.**
- **Establish an in-house cleaning and disinfection routine with rotation of areas to keep whole hospital clean.**
- **Provide separate kennels for infectious and elective patients.**
- **Be particularly attentive to dermatology cases.**
- **Diseased and infected areas are a major risk factor for surgical site infections. Treat animals affected with skin diseases or that have distant wounds before performing elective surgeries.**

**FECAVA WORKING GROUP ON HYGIENE AND THE USE OF ANTIMICROBIALS IN VETERINARY PRACTICE © OCTOBER 2018**