

The Case of Insufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Improving Skin Care and MDRO Prevention in Long-Term Care



The Case

A 66-year-old, short-stay resident with a methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) infection in his prosthetic joint receives antibiotics through his PICC line. He does not have a draining wound, active diarrhea, or other secretions that cannot be contained.



The Challenge

The nurse is preparing to enter the resident's room to flush his central line and perform a dressing change. What PPE should the nurse don before entering the resident's room?

The Error

The nurse enters the room wearing only gloves because no gowns are stocked outside the door. The nurse is aware of the resident's clinical history.

Knowledge Check Questions

1. On what type of transmission-based precautions should this resident be placed?

- A. Contact precautions
- B. Enhanced barrier precautions
- C. Standard precautions

2. What can be done to prevent this error from occurring again? (Select all that apply)

- A. Assign staff members from each shift to restock PPE.
- B. Monitor staff from the hallways to ensure the correct PPE is worn for each resident interaction.
- C. Educate staff on the different types of precautions required for different patients and activities.

Rationale for Each Answer

Staff should follow enhanced barrier precautions in this case. The nurse is planning to perform central line care. This is a high-risk activity (device care) on a high-risk resident (due to their indwelling device and MRSA infection). Contact precautions and isolation of the resident to his room are not required in this case because he does not have a draining wound, active diarrhea, or other secretions that cannot be contained. The activity of performing central line care requires a gown and gloves to prevent transmission of infectious pathogens between the resident and the clothes or hands of the healthcare worker. All members of the healthcare team are responsible for ensuring that proper PPE is worn and is stocked appropriately to prevent lapses in infection prevention.

AHRQ Pub. No. 25(26)-0066
October 2025

Answers to the Knowledge Check: 1-B; 2-A, B, and C