Fingernail Standards

Effective Date: August 28, 2012

REVIEWED ON:

1. N/A

REVIEWED BY:

1. N/A

RELATONED POLICIES

1. Performance Improvement (Corrective Action) (HR-GEN-509)
2. Applicable Department Policies

REASON FOR POLICY

1. To reduce the risk of transmission of pathogens from healthcare workers to patients.

SCOPE

1. This policy applies to all employees, including physicians, who have contact with patients, patient food, or medical supplies. This includes, but is not limited to, employees and physicians who work in the following departments:
   - All clinical nursing units including perioperative services and emergency department
   - Respiratory Care
   - Outpatient Clinics
   - SPD
   - Food Services
   - Environmental Services
   - Laboratory (for those who have contact with patient specimens)
   - Volunteers (for those who have direct patient contact)
   - School (for those who have direct patient contact)
   - Child Life
   - Radiology
   - Pharmacy
   - Therapy Services (Physical, Speech, Occupational, those who have direct patient contact)
POLICY

1. Artificial fingernails and fingernail enhancements contribute to nail changes that have been found to increase the colonization and transmission of pathogens to patients. Therefore:
   A. Artificial nails and nail enhancements shall not be worn at any time; only natural nails are permitted (See keynote #1).
   B. Fingernails are to be short and neatly manicured. They should not extend more than 1/8” past the fingertip.
   C. Intact nail polish is permitted; chipped nail polish is promptly removed.

2. Specific departments may institute additional measures based on established standards of care for specialty departments.

3. Non-adherence to this policy will result in initiation of the corrective action policy.

KEYNOTE

1. Anything applied to natural nails other than polish is considered to be an enhancement. This includes, but is not limited to:
   - Artificial Nails
   - Tips, caps, or extensions
   - Wraps
   - Appliques
   - Gels
   - Nail Jewelry

2. Wearing gloves is not an acceptable substitution for removal of nails.

REFERENCES


Moolenar, R. et. al., (2002). A prolonged outbreak of p. aeruginosa in a neonatal intensive care unit: Did staff fingernails play a role in disease transmission? Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology, 21 (2).


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