News

Sixty seconds on . . . gloves off

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Is there going to be a fight?

Only if you mean fighting infection. Nurses at Great Ormond Street Hospital have started the “Gloves are off” campaign to encourage healthcare professionals to reduce their use of non-sterile gloves and instead wash their hands more regularly.

What’s wrong with wearing gloves?
Research has shown that non-sterile gloves are associated with an increased risk of cross contamination and transmission of healthcare associated infections, because they’re often used when not needed or not changed when they should be. They can also make patients feel uncomfortable, by putting a physical barrier between them and the person caring for them.  

I’ll never wear gloves again . . .
The campaign motto is “no risk, no glove,” so wearing gloves is still the right thing to do when there is a risk.

What did the campaign involve?
In the campaign, which launched in May 2018, nurses used a number of approaches to encourage staff to review their glove use, including educational guidance on when gloves should be worn, posters, screensavers, and talking to staff about assessing the risk before wearing gloves for giving medication.

Did it work?
Absolutely, David Attenborough would be proud. Great Ormond Street Hospital ordered 3.7 million fewer non-sterile gloves in the year after the campaign launched compared with the year before, saving over £90 000 (€1m; $1.1m) and avoiding the use of 18 tonnes of plastic. Plus, staff reported hand dermatitis less frequently.

We should all be doing this . . .
That’s the plan. The campaign team recently met with NHS Improvement to discuss rolling out the practice across the country. Other hospitals have also expressed an interest in the scheme. The team hopes that the double benefit of cost and environmental savings will encourage other hospitals to take up the challenge to reduce their use.

Footnotes

• The campaign is led by lead practice educators Nicola Wilson and Amy Leonard, and lead nurse for infection prevention and control Helen Dunn, all from Great Ormond Street Hospital.

References
