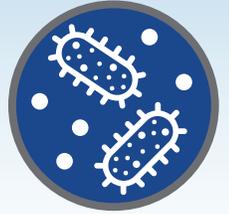# Infection Control Practices

These practices reduce the total number of animals that get sick and limit the spread when one does. Follow these steps to control infections in your facility.

ANIMAL CARE AID

Quarantine animals when they arrive (or return) so they do not bring a new illness into your facility. Even if they appear healthy, quarantine ensures that if they break with disease shortly after arriving, they will not infect the rest of your animals. **Isolation** prevents an animal that is already sick from infecting others. Keep these animals in a quarantine/isolation area that is **physically separated** from healthy animals in another building or room with a door. This limits disease spread through contact or in the air. It also reminds you and your employees to take extra precautions when going in and out of the area. Your veterinarian should tell you how long animals need to be quarantined or isolated.

Dedicate equipment to the quarantine/isolation area so you're not sharing it among sick and healthy animals. Many items can act as *fomites*, or objects that carry and spread germs. These include:

- Cages, bedding, dishes, and toys
- Medical and grooming supplies
- Cleaning equipment and bottles
- Your clothing and shoes
- Trash items, bags, and bins

Consider using disposable items and keep trash separate until you can safely remove it. Or buy spares **for use only in the quarantine/isolation area.**

If you must bring something out, disinfect it before using with healthy animals.

Divide labor. Ideally one person works with quarantined or sick animals only. They do not interact with healthy animals or go into the main facility at all. If that's not possible, **work from cleanest to dirtiest:**

1. Very young, nursing, and pregnant animals
2. The main healthy population
3. Quarantined animals
4. Sick animals in isolation

1. Preparing medications or other treatments
2. Preparing and distributing food and water
3. Cleaning cages or pens
4. Taking out trash

Use personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid contact with germs.

- Apply coveralls or a disposable gown over your regular clothes.
- Wear boot covers (disposable or over-the-shoe) or a dedicated pair of shoes.
- Use gloves to reduce contact with your hands. Simply wearing gloves reminds you not to touch anything you don't have to, and to wash your hands after removing and disposing of them.
- Remove hats, scarves, or bulky coats if they cannot be covered or decontaminated easily.

PRACTICAL TIP

If you wear glasses, consider covering them with safety goggles or a face shield. Remember to remove the covering and disinfect the glasses before leaving.

Decontaminate yourself and your equipment so you don't bring germs back out of the quarantine/isolation area with you.

- Sanitize any items that must come out with you.
- Carefully remove and dispose of PPE in the dedicated trash.
- Change or disinfect your shoes with boot scrub or a foot bath.
- ALWAYS wash your hands.
- If you must go back with healthy animals, take a shower if possible and change clothes.

Learn more at www.aphis.usda.gov/animalwelfare/aids

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