

# CareCertify LLC

## Front-Line Caregiver Training Series

CG-02

# Infection Prevention & Control

## Participant Guide

Front-Line Caregiver Training Series · Audience: CNAs · HHAs · PCAs · DSPs · Caregivers · CE Hours: 1.0

## Clean Hands, Consistent Precautions — In the Home

Infection prevention is one of the most effective things you do all day, and in home care it rests on you. You may not have a facility's supplies, so you carry your own knowledge and habits into every home. Many clients are vulnerable to infection and serious complications.

This guide covers the everyday practices — hand hygiene, standard precautions, PPE, safe disposal, and cleaning — adapted to the home setting. None of it is complicated; all of it depends on doing it every time.

### Learning Objectives — by the end of this module you will be able to:

- Explain how infections spread and who is most at risk
- Apply standard precautions with every client
- Perform hand hygiene correctly in the home
- Select and use PPE appropriately
- Safely handle and dispose of contaminated materials
- Recognize and report signs of infection

## Section 1: How Infections Spread

Infections spread through contact (hands and surfaces), droplets, and sometimes through the air. Hands are the single most common way germs travel. Many home care clients are older or medically fragile and especially vulnerable.

Every place you break the chain — clean hands, gloves, a wiped surface — prevents harm.

## Section 2: Standard Precautions

Standard precautions are the baseline you use with every client, every time, because you can't always tell who carries an infection. They include hand hygiene, PPE when there's a risk of exposure, safe handling of body fluids and sharps, and cleaning. Treat all blood and body fluids as potentially infectious.

## Section 3: Hand Hygiene in the Home

Hand hygiene is the single most important infection-control practice. Wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when hands are visibly soiled, after bathroom help, and before handling food; use alcohol-based sanitizer when hands aren't visibly soiled. In the home, carry sanitizer so you're never without it.

Perform hand hygiene before and after every client contact, before gloving, and after removing gloves.

### **Gloves are not a substitute**

Wearing gloves does not replace hand hygiene. Clean your hands before gloving and again after removing gloves, every time.

## **Section 4: Personal Protective Equipment**

PPE — gloves, gowns or aprons, masks, and eye protection — creates a barrier against exposure. Choose PPE based on the task and risk. Put on and remove (don and doff) PPE in the correct order to avoid contaminating yourself, and discard single-use PPE after each use, performing hand hygiene afterward.

## **Section 5: Safe Handling and Disposal**

Bag and dispose of soiled materials per the care plan and local rules. Never recap needles; place sharps in an approved sharps container. Handle soiled linens carefully and launder them separately in hot water. If you experience a needlestick or other exposure, report it immediately to get prompt care.

## **Section 6: Cleaning in the Home**

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and any shared equipment, using the correct product and observing its required contact time. Keep the client's care area clean and clutter-free. Remember you are a guest in someone's home — work respectfully with the household and follow the care plan.

## **Section 7: When You Are Ill**

Protecting clients includes managing your own health. Report your illness per agency policy and stay home when required rather than bringing infection to vulnerable clients. Cover coughs and sneezes, perform hand hygiene, and keep vaccinations current per agency and public-health guidance.

## **Section 8: Recognizing and Reporting Infection**

Watch for signs of infection: fever, a new cough, vomiting or diarrhea, redness/swelling/drainage from a wound, increased confusion, or a general decline. Report these to the nurse or supervisor promptly. In older adults, infection can present as confusion or a sudden change rather than an obvious fever — so report changes early.

### **Report changes early**

In older adults, the first sign of infection is often confusion or a sudden change, not a fever. When something seems off, report it — don't wait.

## **Key Terms**

Term	What it means
Standard precautions	Infection-control practices used with every client, every

	time.
Hand hygiene	Washing with soap and water or using sanitizer — the top practice.
PPE	Personal protective equipment: gloves, gowns/aprons, masks, eye protection.
Don / doff	Putting on / taking off PPE in the correct order.
Sharps container	Approved container for safe disposal of needles.
Standard of infection in elders	Infection may show as confusion or sudden change rather than fever.

## Check Your Understanding

1. Name the main ways infections spread.
2. What is the single most important infection-control practice, and when do you do it?
3. Are gloves a substitute for hand hygiene?
4. How should needles be disposed of in the home?
5. Why might infection in an older adult show up as confusion?

## What's Next

### Looking ahead

Next, CG-03: Professional Boundaries & Ethics covers the line between caring and overstepping, gifts, dual relationships, and confidentiality.