

# Glove Use in Laundry Practices

## What types of gloves are used in laundry practice?

Gloves used in laundry practices are single use, disposable gloves. They are used during the handling of soiled linen, cleaning/disinfection and waste management. These include:

- Examination/medical gloves (non-sterile, non-powdered):
  - Nitrile – safest practice
  - Latex - Under WH&S (2011) regulations should only be used when no safer alternative exists.  
Allergy risks must be identified, assessed and controlled
  - Vinyl - less fit, can cause hands to sweat resulting in discomfort and skin conditions.

Note:

Reusable utility gloves should only be used for environmental cleaning and chemical use (decontaminated between uses, follow manufacturer's instructions for discard).

## Why are gloves worn?

Gloves are used to:

- Protect health care workers (HCWs) from exposure to blood, body substances, mucous membranes, and non-intact skin.
- Reduce the risk of spreading infectious organisms between individuals, equipment and the environment.
- Reduce the risk of HCW exposure to hazardous substances and chemicals

## Facts about glove and protection

- Gloves can carry and spread infectious organisms.
- Gloves must NOT be cleaned with alcohol-based hand rub – they are single use
- Gloves do not guarantee full protection due to potential microscopic defects or contamination during removal.
- Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene.
- Hand hygiene must always be performed before putting on gloves and after taking them off.
- Gloves must be removed after each task or activity.
- Cuts or breaks on hands should be covered with an occlusive dressing before gloving.

## When gloves are used in laundry practices

Gloves ARE used when performing the following tasks

Exposure type	Example
	<b>Choice: Nitrile, Latex, or Vinyl:</b> Note: those with latex allergies must wear vinyl or nitrile gloves

# Glove Use in Laundry Practices

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Where the HCW skin is NOT intact (e.g. through eczema, or cracked or dry skin)</li> <li>➤ During all soiled laundering activities (collecting soiled items, transporting soiled items, sorting soiled items, placing soiled items in washing machines)</li> <li>➤ When attending to general waste</li> </ul> <p><b>Choice: Nitrile, Latex, Vinyl or Reusable Utility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ During general laundry cleaning/disinfection.</li> <li>➤ When attending general spill cleaning</li> <li>➤ Managing chemicals</li> </ul> <p><b>Choice: Nitrile gloves:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When handling potential or confirmed infectious linen items and during outbreaks</li> <li>➤ When attending to infectious waste, spills and cleaning/disinfection during outbreak.</li> </ul> <p><b>Choice: Nitrile gloves:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When handling linen contaminated with cytotoxic body substances</li> <li>➤ When handling cytotoxic waste or attending to cytotoxic substance spills</li> </ul>
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## When gloves should not be used in laundry practices

Gloves are NOT used when performing the following tasks (except when required for transmission precautions or if blood or body fluid exposure is anticipated):

Exposure type	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Undertaking tasks in clean area of the laundry (clean items in a dryer, removing items from a dryer, sorting, folding, hanging, setting trolleys, ironing, fixing labels)</li> <li>➤ Distributing or decanting clean linen in the laundry or on the floors</li> <li>➤ Using the telephone</li> <li>➤ Completing documentation</li> <li>➤ Moving in corridors or outside the unclean area of the laundry</li> </ul>

## When to change gloves during laundry practices

- After contact with blood or body substance
- Between activities or tasks
- If gloves are damaged

# Glove Use in Laundry Practices

- When hands become sweaty, to reduce the risk of dermatitis.

Note: When moving from the unclean area in the laundry gloves must always be removed

## **Overuse of gloves can:**





- Increase HCW skin irritation or dermatitis
- Waste resources and raise costs
- Work against sustainability measures
- Result in missed hand hygiene opportunities

## **Hand hygiene is required with glove use:**

- Hand hygiene must be performed before putting on gloves
- Hand hygiene must be performed after removing gloves

# Glove Use in Laundry Practices

Glove Examples:

		Nitrile examination gloves
		Latex examination gloves
		Vinyl examination gloves
		Reusable utility gloves (cleaning/disinfection only)

# Glove Use in Laundry Practices

## Technique for donning and removing non-sterile examination gloves

When the hand hygiene indication occurs before a contact requiring glove use, perform hand hygiene by rubbing with an alcohol-based handrub or by washing with soap and water.

### I. HOW TO DON GLOVES:



1. Take out a glove from its original box



2. Touch only a restricted surface of the glove corresponding to the wrist (at the top edge of the cuff)



3. Don the first glove



4. Take the second glove with the bare hand and touch only a restricted surface of glove corresponding to the wrist



5. To avoid touching the skin of the forearm with the gloved hand, turn the external surface of the glove to be donned on the folded fingers of the gloved hand, thus permitting to glove the second hand

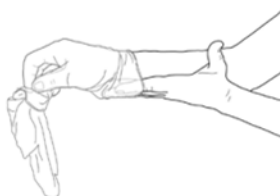


6. Once gloved, hands should not touch anything else that is not defined by indications and conditions for glove use

### II. HOW TO REMOVE GLOVES:



1. Pinch one glove at the wrist level to remove it, without touching the skin of the forearm, and peel away from the hand, thus allowing the glove to turn inside out



2. Hold the removed glove in the gloved hand and slide the fingers of the ungloved hand inside between the glove and the wrist. Remove the second glove by rolling it down the hand and fold into the first glove



3. Discard the removed gloves

4. Then, perform hand hygiene by rubbing with an alcohol-based handrub or by washing with soap and water

WHO. (n.d). Glove Use Information Leaflet. [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/integrated-health-services-\(ihs\)/infection-prevention-and-control/hand-hygiene/tools/glove-use-information-leaflet.pdf?sfvrsn=13670aa\\_10](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/integrated-health-services-(ihs)/infection-prevention-and-control/hand-hygiene/tools/glove-use-information-leaflet.pdf?sfvrsn=13670aa_10)

# Glove Use in Laundry Practices

## References

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