



Ice Machines

Ice is used for numerous purposes in the clinical setting including for consumption by patients and staff; to keep laboratory specimens cool; and for treatments such as ice packs.

Bacteria have been isolated from ice, ice storage chests and ice making machines in health care facilities.

Ice may become contaminated if the water source is contaminated, from dirty hands touching the ice, during improper storage of ice, and from poor equipment cleaning practices.

To minimize the risk for contamination, ice machines that dispense ice directly into a container are preferred. If ice machines are being purchased, a direct-dispense system is recommended by IPAC.

If older chest type ice machines are in use, IPAC recommends:

- wash hands before obtaining ice,
- a smooth surface scoop should be used to access the ice,
- the scoop should only be touched by the handle,
- do not store the scoop in the machine/bin,
- provide a clean, dedicated holder for the ice scoop,
- the scoop/holder should be inspected, cleaned, disinfected and dried at least daily,
- do not return unused ice to the storage bin,
- keep the doors of the ice machine closed when not in use.

It is the responsibility of the Health Services Manager (HSM) to ensure that a schedule of cleaning and maintenance is followed (including the Preventative Maintenance Program through Engineering Services).

Daily (delegated unit based staff by HSM):

- Inspect the ice machine for any signs of mould, put the machine out of use, and report,
- Clean scoop/scoop holder daily,
- Do not store anything other than ice in the machine (food, pharmaceuticals etc...).

All ice machines and chests should be cleaned by Engineering Services following the manufacturers' instructions.

Notes:

At the VG and NSRC sites follow policy IC 06-007 which states that high risk immunocompromised patients on "*Water Precautions*" shall not consume ice from the ice machines.

It is recommended by IPAC to display safe ice handling principles near the ice machine – see page three of this document.

Testing of ice and ice making machinery is only recommended if epidemiologically warranted as part of an outbreak investigation.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2003). Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities.

Capital District Health Authority. Infection Prevention and Control Department. (IC 06-007) Water Restriction Policy “Water Rules”.

Ontario Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC) 2009. Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning and Prevention and Control of Infections: In all Health Care Settings. Pgs. 82-83.

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Safe Ice Handling Principles (Chest Type Ice Machines)

Please Post Near Ice Machine

- wash your hands before obtaining ice,
- a smooth surface scoop should be used to access the ice,
- the scoop should only be touched by the handle,
- do not store the scoop in the machine/bin,
- provide a clean, dedicated holder for the ice scoop,
- the scoop/holder should be inspected, cleaned, disinfected and dried at least daily,
- inspect the ice machine for any signs of mould daily, put the machine out of use, and report,
- do not return unused ice to the storage bin,
- keep the doors of the ice machine closed when not in use,
- do not store anything other than ice in the machine (food, pharmaceuticals etc...).

