



The Purchase and Ongoing Maintenance of Furniture for Clinical Areas

Background:

Providing comfortable surroundings for patients, their visitors, and staff is an important part of patient care.

In order to provide a safe and comfortable environment, several infection prevention and control (IPAC) criteria must be considered before purchasing furniture for use in the clinical areas.

Clinical areas include, but are not limited to: nursing stations, family rooms, lounges, staff rooms, dining rooms, waiting rooms and direct care areas such as exam rooms and inpatient/resident rooms.

Poorly chosen upholstered furniture or damaged furniture and surfaces may contribute to infection risk by harboring infectious microorganisms.

General Considerations:

The ease of cleaning and disinfection is an important consideration in the choice of materials for health care settings.

Materials and finishes must be suitable to being subjected to hospital-grade detergents, cleaners and disinfectants.

Compatibility of finishes with hospital-grade detergents, cleaners and disinfectants should be investigated and obtained *in writing* from the manufacturer(s) prior to purchase.

Recommendations:

Upholstered furniture must be covered or made with materials that are fluid-resistant and non-porous such as vinyl.

Choose metals and hard plastic over wooden finishes. Most varnishes wear away when exposed to hospital-grade detergents, cleaners and disinfectants and leave exposed and porous wood.

Chose furniture with minimal seams (seams may trap bacteria and are difficult areas to clean).

Minimize the use of upholstered furniture and furnishings in patient-care areas.

Ongoing Inspection/Maintenance:

Furnishings should be inspected at routine intervals to ensure they are clean and intact.

Items that are soiled, torn or damaged (exposed particle board, raw wood or worn varnish) need to be removed from patient care areas and repaired or replaced.

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC (2003). Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities. Retrieved April 5, 2012 from, http://www.google.ca/url?q=http://www.cdc.gov/hicpac/pdf/guidelines/eic_in_HCF_03.pdf&sa=U&ei=feB9T9vXL5Sk8ASgnrjmDA&ved=0OCBIQFjAA&usq=AFQjCNHNW5gLtJhq-mmFwQVRX2Np4bjUNg

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