

Isolation Room Setup

Preparation of the isolation room in a residential home:

- Start by picking a room that preferably has an outside entrance and an interior bathroom. If this cannot be accomplished try an interior room with an interior bathroom and at least one outside operable window. Again these are ideals and we will work with what we have.
- Next clear out all furniture except the bare essential. Try to only leave furniture that can be sanitized. This means no unsealed or unpainted wood or cloth. Metal is preferable. The remaining furniture should be easy to clean and should not conceal or retain dirt or moisture, either within or around it.
- Remove all clothing from closets and anything else remaining that is not essential to the victims recovery. Also take down all drapes and curtains. Blinds are okay if they are plastic, metal or sealed wood.
- If the room is carpeted - remove carpet. If you cannot remove the carpet covering the floor with several layers of 4 or 6 mil plastic will do. If using this method make sure that you cut your plastic long enough to go at least 2 feet up the wall. Duct tape the plastic to the wall all the way around. You are basically creating a plastic tub.
- BEFORE you lay plastic - seal up each floor or wall vent that will be below the plastic. this can be done by stuffing a towel down the uncovered vent and then with duct tape and plastic covering the vent so no air get blow out. This also includes any intake vents. If there are vents anywhere else in the room seal them as well. Do this even if you are not putting plastic on the floor.
- Seal all other entrances or holes or possible venting from the isolation room into the rest of the home. Do not forget attic accesses if they exit.
- Seal all exterior windows except two. One will be used as an air intake and the other as an exhaust. On the exhaust window place a fan (a box fan works good) in front of that window to blow out. If you have access to HEPA filters it would be a good idea to place one over the or in front of the fan to minimize problems with the exhaust to your neighbors and/or possible wind blowing contaminated air back into your other open window and doors to your house. All windows and doors within 20' downwind of this exhaust window should be sealed with plastic. If your intake window is within 20' of your exhaust window it would be good to stretch a HEPA filter over that windows opening as well. Only open the exhaust window large enough for the fan. Open the intake window the same amount. If you only have one window use it for exhaust and use the intake from the home through the door.
- If you do not have an exterior entrance and are using the homes interior entrance to the room for entering and exiting the room you will need to create a clean room. This is a small chamber where you can change your clothes after exiting and before entering the room and decontaminate yourself before going into the rest of your home. This is done by removing the door first then draping plastic as a curtain in its place. Cut the plastic down the middle to allow passage through the plastic. Try to overlap the two pieces of the curtain. Duct taping the curtain to the header above the door will help ensure containment. Then into the hall about 4 or 5 feet hang another plastic curtain or curtains to create a small room. Cut an entrance/exit slit in that curtain as well. Duct taping this to the ceiling and wall will also help with containment.
- Place a chair and table in that room to aid with dressing and undressing and decontamination procedures. The table and chair should be cleanable as well. On the table should be a large water basin a bottle of spray water/bleach mixture (1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart of water solution) for decontamination several large plastic bags for placing contaminated discarded clothing. A foot operated hamper would be a good idea for convenience. Stock the basin with suitable supplies for hand washing. On the table leave room for personal protective equipment. A checklist may be useful to ensure all equipment is available.
- Ensure additional precautions by indicating with appropriate signage on the entrance (for example, bio-hazard logo). This is important so that if you have guests they can see clearly that the isolation room is not a normal room.
- Place a log book at the entrance of the isolation room. All health care workers or visitors entering the isolation area must sign the log book.
- Place appropriate waste bags in the room on a foot-operated bin.
- Place a puncture-proof container for sharps in the room.
- Keep the patient's personal belongings to a minimum. Keep water pitcher and cup, tissue wipes, and all items necessary for attending to personal hygiene within the patient's reach.
- Collect linen as needed.
- The patient should be allocated his/her own non-critical items of patient care equipment, e.g. stethoscope, thermometer and sphygmomanometers. Any item of patient care equipment that is required for other patients should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to use.
- Place appropriate container with a lid outside the door for equipment that requires disinfection and sterilization. Once equipment has been appropriately cleaned it will need to be sterilized.
- Keep adequate equipment required for cleaning and disinfection inside the patients' room.