

Interior Health Guidance on the Use of Fans in Health Care Settings

Fans in Health Care setting create a risk of transmission and are not recommended but may be considered. Sometimes fan use is unavoidable however should only be used for short durations. All alternate systems should be assessed prior to fan use.

Consultation with infection control (IH owned)/Communicable Disease Unit (partner sites and private facilities) is recommended prior to fan use to ensure the health and safety of all people within the healthcare setting.

Review prior to use of fan:

- Reduce risk of turbulence associated with fans to reduce risk of transmission of organisms
- HVAC (Heating, ventilation and air conditioning) is working appropriately.
- Consider other measures to reduce overheating in health care settings (exterior window coverings to reduce sun /heat exposure. Cool cloths etc.
- Assessed by Plant maintenance to determine if appropriate mechanically for use.
- Small fans only, and must be on low setting, placed at bedside on a table, facing ceiling, not face level and located at the head of the bed.

Fans shall not be used:

- During an Outbreak.
- With patients who have potentially infectious conditions or on additional precautions.
- During aseptic procedures, i.e. wound care.

Cleaning, disinfection and maintenance:

- Consider manufactures recommendations for cleaning and disinfection.
- A schedule must be determined and should include specific staff assigned to clean and disinfect and the frequency.

References:

1. <https://albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/ipc/if-hp-ipc-info-sheet-portable-fans.pdf>
2. <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ltrh/2020/08/covid-19-fans-air-conditioning-ltrh.pdf?la=en>
3. <http://teamsites.interiorhealth.ca/sites/Clinical/IPC/APIC%20Online%20Materials/APIC%20115%20Heating,%20Ventilation,%20and%20Air%20Conditioning.pdf>
4. <https://www.bcpft.nhs.uk/documents/policies/i/2075-infection-prevention-and-control-assurance-sop-32-reducing-risks-of-infection-associated-with-the-use-of-electric-fans-in-patient-areas/file#:~:text=Fans%20are%20considered%20to%20be,patients%20and%20lead%20to%20infection.&text=Environmental%20contamination%20due%20to%20MRSA%20shedding%20may%20be%20increased%20with%20fan%20use.>
5. <https://professionals.wrha.mb.ca/old/extranet/ipc/files/manuals/acutecare/Rev1602-10.pdf>
6. <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/5/publichealth/publichealthdepts/extreme/fan-guidelines.html>