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Dress Code for All Personnel at Karolinska University Hospital

Work Clothes

- All personnel shall wear short-sleeved work clothes during patient-related care (1, 3). "Patient-related care" is work in rooms where patients are examined, treated, or cared for.
- Work clothes shall only be worn at the work place. "The work place" may include institutional care, non-institutional care, home health care, patients' homes, and other housing.
- Work clothes are changed daily or when they get wet or visibly soiled (1-9).
- Work clothes are the same throughout Karolinska University Hospital, and they are supplied by the employer. Employees may not wear their own clothing or clothing with promotional messages (10-11).
- Work clothes may not be washed in the department or at home (4). The employer is responsible for washing work clothes.
- Employees may not combine work clothes and private clothes, with the exception of socks, shoes, and headscarf (10-11).
- Closed-toe shoes are preferred, for the safety of the employee.
- Headscarves shall be changed daily and washed in hot water (at least 60°). While working, the employee should tuck the headscarf into the scrub top so that the headscarf does not come into contact with patients. The employer can supply headscarves.
- Employees may not wear warm vests or jackets during direct patient care, to lower the risk of infection (7).
- Personnel may not wear patient clothing.
- Personnel shall wear their nametags or ID cards on their work clothing so that their names and positions can be seen clearly.

Jewellery and Watches

- Rings, bracelets, and watches may not be worn. These collect microorganisms and prevent employees from effectively disinfecting their hands (12-15). Also, Gram-negative intestinal bacteria thrive under rings (15-17).

- Rings and bracelets can damage protective gloves, and they can also harm a patient or an employee.
- An unhealed or inflamed piercing presents an infection risk both for the employee and patients (18). Health care workers at the hospital should not have piercings in mucous membranes or hair-covered skin.
- Earrings may be worn if they are in a healed hole and if they will not hang down into the work area.

Fingernails

- Keep your nails short, and do not use colored nail polish. The highest bacterial growth on the hands is under the nails (19). Long sharp nails can make holes in gloves, and they can make it difficult to disinfect one's hands effectively.
- Colored nail polish as well as French Manicures can hide dirt.
- Fake fingernails may not be worn, because they increase the risk of bacterial growth (20).

Hair

- Long hair and beards must be put up when working. Hair can transmit disease (21-23).

Protective Clothing

- A plastic apron or a protective coat must be worn when work involves direct contact with a patient or a patient's bed, and when handling soiled objects (7, 24-26). Examples include making a bed, personal care, and invasive examinations and treatments.
- Because plastic aprons are always one-time-use, and furthermore they are waterproof, they are typically the first choice.
- A protective coat must be associated with only one patient. The coat shall be changed daily or when it becomes visibly soiled or wet.

Karolinska University Laboratory

- The above rules apply to laboratory work as well. Laboratory coats correspond to protective coats, and they shall be worn according to local regulations.

Administrative Work

If the demarcation between patient-related work and administrative work is not clear, the head of the department—in consultation with the Infection Control Unit—will decide which duties within their own department constitute purely administrative work.

- Personnel with administrative duties outside of patient care shall wear their own clothes.
- Personnel with administrative duties within patient care can wear either their own clothes or work clothes. The head of the department, in consultation with the Infection Control Unit, is responsible for carrying out the local rules. The combination of private clothes and work clothes is not allowed.
- Nametags and ID cards shall be worn on work clothing so that the employee's first name, last name, and position can be seen clearly.

Appendix for dress in surgical departments and sterilisation centers/sterilisation technology departments

In addition to the rules below, local rules adapted to work in a department can be developed by the head of that department in collaboration with the Infection Control Unit.

- Surgical clothes are worn only in surgical departments, the sterilisation center, and other units in conjunction with surgical procedures.
- Surgical clothes are stored in designated shelves/lockers. Surgical clothes may not be hoarded or kept in personal lockers, due to the risk of indirect contamination. Surgical clothes are changed every day or when they become wet or damp (27).
- Surgical scrub tops without elastic at the waist should be tucked inside the scrub trousers.
- Surgical caps (single-use or reusable) shall be used by all personnel in the surgical department. It is important that the cap covers all hair on the head, to keep hairs from falling into sterile areas or open cuts (21-23, 27). The cap shall be changed every day. Cloth surgical caps are supplied and washed by the employer.
- Work shoes belong to the hospital and may not be worn outdoors (28).
- For short errands outside the surgical department, a clean white coat is to be worn over surgical clothes. The coat must be buttoned up (29).
- Change into new surgical clothes when returning from emergency calls outside the surgical department (30).

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