

Section: UTMB On-line Documentation	1.23 - Policy
Subject: Healthcare Epidemiology Policies and Procedures	11.19.10 - Revised
Topic: Post-mortem Care of Isolation Patients	1978 - Author

1.23 Post-mortem Care of Isolation Patients

Purpose	To delineate appropriate precautions for reducing the risk of exposure to communicable pathogens following death.
Audience	All employees of UTMB hospitals, clinics, outpatient surgical center, contract workers, volunteers, and students
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It shall be the responsibility of the attending physician to place a tag on any deceased patient, preferably on the great toe, who at the time of death, requires isolation or is suspected of having a communicable disease. • Diseases that require tags include those that are required by law to be reportable, and all those which by hospital policy/CDC recommendations require isolation or special precautions. Diseases that shall require tagging are: AIDS, Anthrax, Brucellosis, Cholera, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Viral Hepatitis, HIV infection, Plague, Smallpox, Q Fever, Rabies, Relapsing Fever, Spotted Fever Group Rickettsioses, Syphilis, Tuberculosis, Tularemia and Viral Hemorrhagic Fevers. • The tag shall be made from card stock paper and shall be no smaller than five (5) centimeters by ten (10) centimeters. All tags shall include the words “COMMUNICABLE DISEASE-BLOOD/BODY SUBSTANCE PRECAUTIONS REQUIRED” in letters no smaller than six (6) millimeters in height. The name of the deceased person shall be written on the tag. The tag shall remain affixed to the body until the preparation of the body has been completed, and received by the mortuary.
Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify attending physician of death. Notification shall include communicable disease status, if known. • Identify the type of isolation and precautions for the patient and follow the requirements listed on the door sign. • Don appropriate isolation attire for preparing body. • Prepare body according to guidelines in the Hospital Administration Manual. • Cover draining areas with clean dressings. • Check to ensure that the patient identification tag has been labeled as to isolation or precautionary status when appropriate.

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- Place the patient's personal belongings in a plastic bag, send to the morgue or home with the patient's family with instructions for cleaning or decontaminating if required.
- The Standard Precautions policy shall be followed for any and all contact with blood or body fluids.

- References
1. Rules and Regulation Governing the Control and Reporting of Notifiable Conditions §97.12., Texas Department of Health. October 1994.