Guidelines for ice and ice making machines within community hospitals

Ice is frozen water and under legislation is considered a food (DH, 2004)

Ice used in hospitals should be taken from a hand free ice machine that is plumbed into a suitable source of potable water and installed and used in accordance with manufacturer guidelines. Ice for consumption must not be purchased; and/or stored in the ward or department freezers.

Prior to purchasing a hands free ice machine the area or department must place a request to purchase which will need to be actioned through Procurement in the normal way. Procurement will liaise with Infection Prevention and Control with regards to the suitability of choice of ice machines as necessary.

When purchasing an ice machine please remember to include into the costing and discussions with the supplier quarterly maintenance of the machine as this is a requirement. A separate order will need to be raised through Procurement as before for the quarterly maintenance of the machine.

Machines must be installed and maintained in strict accordance with manufacturer’s guidance.

Estates and Infection Prevention and Control must be made aware of the location of any ice machines.

The environment around the machines must be kept sufficiently clear to allow for air circulation and prevent contamination.

Organisms such as *Stenotrophomonas maltophilia*, pseudomonas and coliforms may cause infections to immunosuppressed patients if ice machines are not properly maintained.
Removal of Ice

- Wash hands thoroughly before removing ice.
- If ice is not able to be deposited from ice machine directly into the receiving receptacle a designated scoop must be used to retrieve the ice.
- The scoop must be smooth and impervious.
- The scoop must be kept in a clean lidded container when not in use and be available for use at all times

Daily cleaning

To reduce the risk to patients the following procedure must be undertaken daily with regards to cleaning and disinfection of ice scoop and container

- Scoop and container to be cleaned and disinfected daily. Wash in detergent and hot water, rinse and dry. Disinfect with sodium hypochlorite 1% (10,000ppm) and rinse thoroughly before drying.
- Scoop and container must be washed and disinfected immediately if contaminated
- Keep daily records of cleaning and disinfection of scoop and container

Guidelines for Cleaning Ice Machines

To reduce the risk to patients the following procedure should be undertaken when cleaning and maintaining ice making machines.

Weekly

- Prior to cleaning, switch off the machine, remove and dispose of ice and drain the water.
- Clean all interior surfaces with detergent and hot water, using a disposable cloth. Rinse and dry
- Disinfect all interior surfaces with Sodium Hypochlorite 1% (10,000 ppm). Rinse thoroughly before drying
- Record date of cleaning and disinfection of ice making machines

Quarterly Maintenance

- The removable parts of the machine should be disassembled for cleaning and checked for breakage, according to manufacturer’s recommendations.
- A record of manufacturer’s or Estate’s department maintenance contract should be kept
- No articles or equipment should be stored on or around the ice machine which could block the air vents
Testing of Ice

To reduce the risk to patients the following procedure must be undertaken with regards to testing of ice for contamination

- Ice in the ice machines must be sent on a quarterly basis to the pathology laboratory for testing by the relevant department.
- Arrangements must be made with the pathology laboratory prior to sending the ice for testing.
- The sending department must request a copy of the results is sent to themselves and the infection prevention and control department.
- If there are any abnormalities shown from the testing of the results these must be followed up promptly and the ice machine must be put out of action until the appropriate remedial action has been undertaken

Staff are advised to

- Wash hands before obtaining ice
- Ensure ice is made from drinking water
- Handle ice with care to avoid contamination; using only a designated scoop
- Do not pick ice out with hands or use a glass or jug to scoop out the ice
- The scoop, should be washed with hot water and detergent, disinfected and dried thoroughly daily before being stored in a clean dry lidded container as indicated above
- Store ice for the shortest practical time
- Ensure machine is cleaned and defrosted weekly as indicated above and documented
- Ensure machine is on a planned maintenance programme, on a minimum of a quarterly basis as indicated above

References