11 steps to prevent superbug infections in MRI

Suggestions for infection control procedures for freestanding imaging centers and hospital radiology departments

1. Your written infection control policy should include MRI cleaning procedures and a cleaning schedule. Post them throughout the center.
2. Make hand washing / hand sanitizing procedure mandatory between patient exams for technologists and any others who come into contact with patients.
3. Clean the MRI tables, inside the bore of the magnet and any other items that come into contact with a patient. Infection control experts recommend this be done between each patient.
4. Clean all pads and positioners with an approved disinfectant. Infection control experts recommend cleaning after each patient.
5. Periodically inspect the pads with a magnifying glass, particularly at the seams, to identify fraying or tearing. If present, the pads should be replaced.
6. Regularly check all padding material with an ultraviolet (black) light and make sure that any biological material detected on the pads can be removed.
7. Replace damaged or contaminated pads with new pads incorporating permanent antimicrobial agents.
8. Use pillows with a waterproof covering that is designed to be surface-wiped. Replace pillows when their barrier is compromised.
9. Promptly remove body fluids, and then surface disinfect all contaminated areas.
10. If a patient has an open wound or any history of MRSA/other infection:
    a. Gloves and gowns should be worn by all staff coming in contact with the patient. These barriers must be removed before touching other areas not coming in contact with the patient, i.e. door knobs, scanner console, computer terminals, etc.
    b. The table and all the pads should be completely cleaned with disinfectant before the next patient is scanned, if it is not already being performed between every patient. For patients with any known infectious process add 10-15 minutes onto the scheduled scan time to assure there is enough time to thoroughly clean the room and all the pads.
11. All furniture should be periodically cleaned. Ideal surfaces are those that are waterproof and wipeable. Infection control experts recommend this be done between each patient.

Source: Adapted from P. Rothschild, “Best Practices for Infection Control in MRI.”