1.0 Introduction
Cohorting is the practice of grouping patients with the same communicable illness together in a multi-bed room. Although the use of single rooms is considered the "gold standard" for managing patients in Additional Precautions (isolation), there are situations where bed or staffing limitations may necessitate consideration of alternatives.

2.0 Cohorting Principles

2.1 An Infection Control Practitioner (ICP) must be consulted when establishing a patient cohort. Contact your area's ICP during regular business hours or alternatively, on nights and weekends, the ICP on-call can be paged via Locating at ext. 207500.

2.2 The following should be considered when establishing a cohort of patients:
- Re-infection by the same organism within a short time period is unlikely
- Each patient has a single, identical laboratory confirmed organism
- The patient is not infected with other communicable illnesses (e.g. patient has RSV and Influenza)
- The patient does not have any antimicrobial resistant organisms (AROs)
- The patient is not immunocompromised

2.3 Patients with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) should not be cohorted in the same room as other patients with CF nor on the same nursing assignment.

3.0 Cohorting Guidelines:

3.1 Bedside Set-up
The following items/equipment should be available at each patient's bedside:
- Appropriate "Additional Precautions" sign on the patient's bed/crib
- Appropriate "Additional Precautions" sign on the door to the room
- Dedicated patient care equipment
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for the health care worker as per the type of Additional Precautions (see section 3.2)
- Laundry hamper close to bedside for PPE disposal
- Hospital approved low level disinfectant wipes or solution
- Alcohol based hand rub for hand hygiene

3.2 Patient Management
- Manage all patients using the appropriate Additional Precautions
  - See Contact Precautions
  - See Droplet/Contact Precautions
- Ensure there is a minimum of 2 metres between each bed space. Further physical separation of the space (e.g. drawing a privacy curtain) may be helpful
- Each patient should be treated individually with dedicated PPE and medical equipment
- Ensure that PPE is changed between each patient

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Patient Cohorting

- If unable to dedicate patient equipment, ensure that all equipment is cleaned and disinfected between uses on different patients
- Appropriate environmental management of patient’s space needs to be implemented, including daily cleaning of space (changing rags and mop heads, etc.). More frequent cleaning protocols should be in consultation with the ICP
- Shared washrooms should be cleaned and disinfected between use by different patients in addition to routine cleaning as per Housekeeping Services protocols for shared washrooms
- Dedicate staff to the cohort and minimize mixing cohort and non-cohort staff
- Restrict unnecessary traffic in and out of the cohort room

3.3 Staff Personal Protective Equipment

- All staff in the cohort room should wear appropriate PPE when entering each patient’s bed space
- PPE is usually not required at the nursing desk in the room if all precautions are followed. Any variation to this would be in consultation with the ICP

4.0 References
