When starting or improving an environmental cleaning (EVC) monitoring program, there are five essential steps to address, which are outlined below. This document focuses on the implementation of fluorescent gel (FG) monitoring, which is generally easier to use and implement, especially when starting a new monitoring program. However, these steps can be adapted to use with other monitoring systems as well.

More information on EVC, including other methods to monitor quality of cleaning, can be found on the [**Environmental Cleaning**](https://www.ahrq.gov/hai/tools/mrsa-prevention/toolkit/environmental-cleaning.html) page of the Toolkit website.

# Five Essential Steps When Implementing an EVC Monitoring Program

## Randomize rooms and high-touch surfaces (HTSs).1

* Randomly select two rooms in a unit and three HTSs within those rooms.
  + Two rooms per unit and three HTSs per room are generally sufficient as an accurate assessment of cleaning.
  + If the unit is performing poorly, consider increasing the number of rooms and HTSs tested or the frequency of evaluations.
* Maintain blinding. Ensure that staff are unaware what rooms have been chosen.
* The following tools can help with the data collection and randomization process:
* [**How To Randomly Order List of Rooms and High Touch Surfaces Tool**](https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/hai/tools/mrsa/028-randomly-order-rooms-surfaces.docx)
* [**Evaluating Environmental Cleaning With Fluorescent Gel Instructions and Form**](https://www.ahrq.gov/sites/default/files/wysiwyg/hai/tools/mrsa/027-evaluating-cleaning-data-collection.docx)

## Place fluorescent gel (FG).2-5

* Apply a 2-centimeter FG dot on the selected HTSs of the patient rooms.
* Gel should not be visible to the naked eye.

## Clean patient rooms.

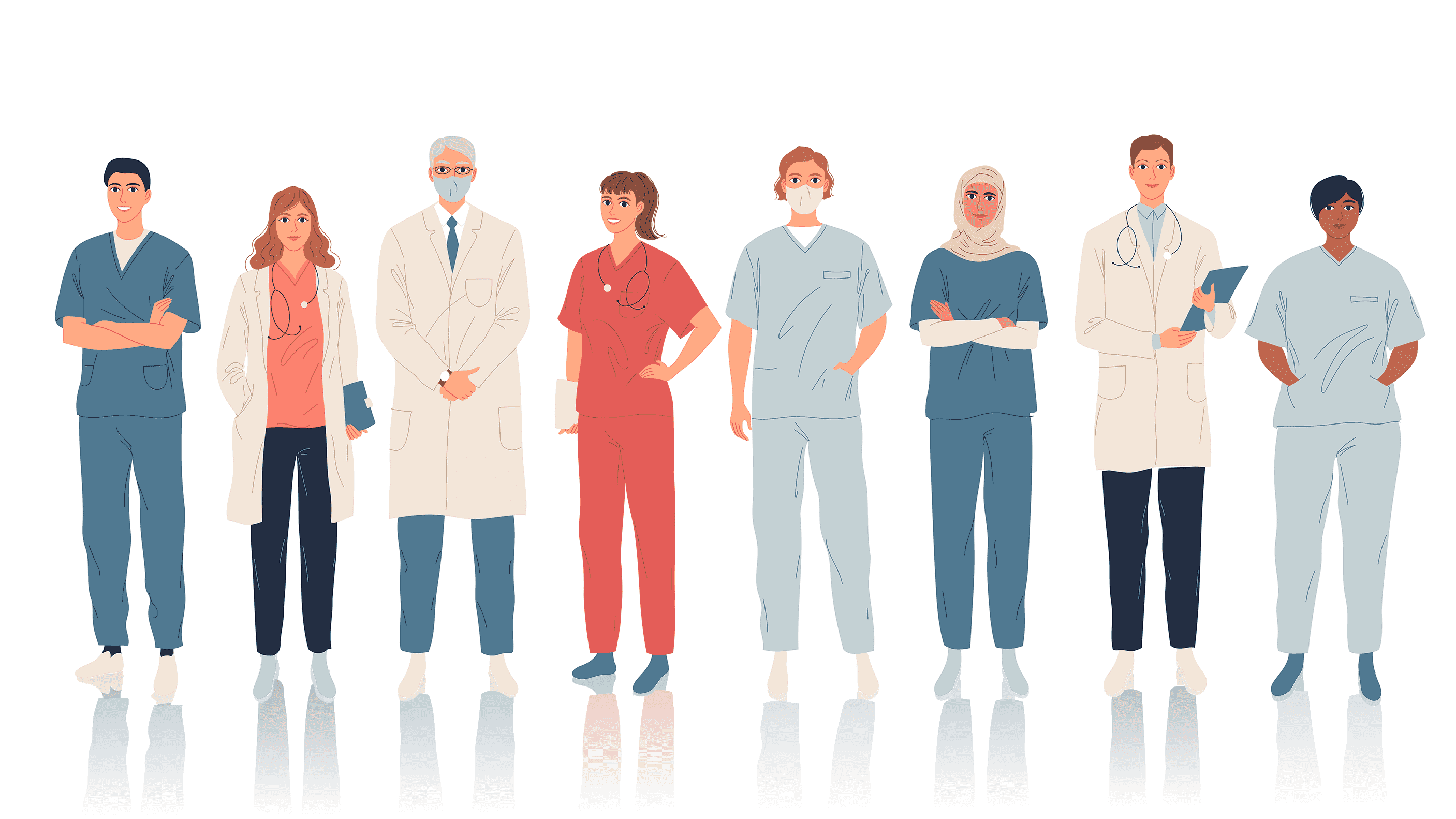
* Allow cleaning to occur as normal. FG dots should be easily wiped away as part of standard cleaning.

Source: Ecolab USA Inc. Image used with permission.

## Check for FG with ultraviolet (UV) light.

* Approximately one day later, use a UV flashlight to check for the presence or absence of FG.
* If the FG is not visible or is smeared, the surface is considered clean.
* If the FG glows under the UV flashlight, the surface is not adequately cleaned.

## Share data feedback.

* Share findings in real time with the EVC associate, either with or without their EVC supervisor present.
* When FG has not been cleaned, examine the causes and identify the barriers.
* Share findings with EVC leadership and hospital committees to drive improvement and accountability.

# References

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