

Infection Prevention

The goal of the **Infection Control Program** is to prevent the transmission of infection to patients, visitors, and workforce members, provide a safe work environment, and improve patient care and safety. Implementing environmental sanitation procedures, cleaning, disinfection, sterilization, hand hygiene, standard precautions and isolation precautions can prevent hospital acquired infections.

Infectious organisms can spread by the air, mucus membranes (eyes, nose, mouth), open skin (cuts, puncture, rash, wounds, burns), and inanimate objects (ie- door knobs, keyboards, bed rails, etc.). It is impossible for you to know who is or is not infected by looking at them. Therefore, take precautions and consider all blood, body fluids, non intact skin, secretions, excretions, and mucus membranes as potentially infectious.

Standard Precautions and isolation (if applicable) are used to protect you and patients from exposures. Some of the major features of Standard Precautions are hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, personal protective equipment, safe injection practices, masks usage for central line placement and epidurals, and care of the environment.

Hand hygiene with soap and water (for 15 seconds) or an alcohol hand sanitizer (golf ball size foam) is the most important thing you can do to prevent the spread of infection. It must be done before and after direct/ indirect care with the patient or their environment, after removing gloves, using the bathroom, coughing, or sneezing.

Artificial fingernails (material applied to the fingernail for the purpose strengthening or lengthening nails) are not permitted for those who have direct contact with patients, patient supplies/instruments, or patient food.

Respiratory hygiene is covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Individuals with signs of a respiratory infection should wear a surgical mask covering the mouth and nose while in the hospital building. (Tissues and masks are available in the lobby respiratory hygiene stations). Hand hygiene should be performed after soiling hands with respiratory secretions.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)- Gown, gloves, mask, eye shields, caps, and shoe protectors can be used to accomplish Standard Precautions and are available on the isolation carts.

Transmission Based Precautions are used in addition to Standard Precautions for any patient diagnosed with or suspected of having a contagious disease. The three categories of isolation are Airborne, Droplet, and Contact Precautions. (Refer to the Isolation Precautions or the Infection Control Manual which are available on the intranet). Know the work practices and precautions to use in your area or job duty to prevent exposures. Report exposures to your Supervisor, Employee Health, and Infection Control.

Cleaning and disinfection- Environmental Services follows principles of cleaning and disinfection, but all workforce members are responsible to help keep the facility clean and safe. For instance- disinfecting wipes (ie-used to clean stethoscopes between patients) and disposable single pt use items are available.

Patient hygiene- Patients need to be educated and encouraged to perform hand hygiene before and after care of their wound, before meals, and after using the toilet/ commode. If a patient is not near a sink or is unable to get up, make alcohol handrub available for their use.

Infection Control Policies are available on the unit Infection Control Manual binder or the intranet.