

# Standard Precautions

## A guide for healthcare workers

### The basics of infection prevention and control

Infection prevention and control involves implementing work practices that reduce the risk of transmission of infectious agents through a two-tiered approach:

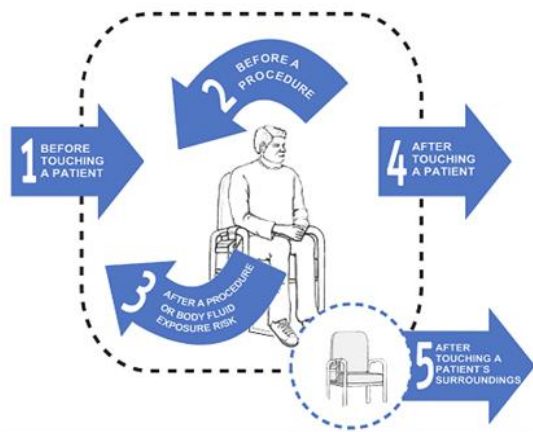
- Standard Precautions – used when caring for all patients, regardless of the patient’s perceived or actual infectious status; and/or when handling blood and/or all other body substances, secretions and excretions (excluding sweat), non-intact skin or mucous membranes.
- Transmission Based Precautions – used in addition to standard precautions when managing patients suspected or known to be being infected with particular agents transmitted by the contact, droplet or airborne routes.

### Standard precautions includes:

- |                                    |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Hand hygiene                    | 4. Environmental cleaning          | 7. Aseptic technique |
| 2. Personal protective equipment   | 5. Reprocessing reusable equipment | 8. Waste management  |
| 3. Safe use and disposal of sharps | 6. Respiratory hygiene             | 9. Linen management  |

### 1. Hand hygiene

- Hand hygiene is the single most effective intervention to reduce the risk of hospital-associated infections.
- Perform hand hygiene using alcohol-based hand rub or liquid soap water.
- Perform hand hygiene as per the ‘5 moments for hand hygiene’.



## **2. Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

- Wear appropriate PPE when you anticipate contact with blood and/or body fluids.
- PPE includes gloves, fluid resistant gowns and/or aprons, eye protection/face shields and surgical masks.
- PPE must be changed between patients and/or when soiled.

## **3. Safe use and disposal of sharps**

- Handle sharps safely during and after procedures, when cleaning used instruments and during disposal of used sharps.
- Do not recap, bend or break used needles after use.
- The person who has used a sharp is responsible for its safe disposal.
- Discard used disposable sharps at the point of use into an approved sharps container.

## **4. Environmental cleaning**

- Follow local environmental cleaning protocols for guidance on cleaning and disinfecting, which should include cleaning schedules, cleaning equipment, cleaning and disinfecting products, cleaning practices and education.

## **5. Reprocessing of reusable medical equipment and instruments**

- Re-usable medical devices, instruments and patient-care equipment should be reprocessed according to their intended use and manufacturer's advice
- Do not reprocess items and equipment marketed as single use.

## **6. Respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette**

- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, preferably with a tissue but **if** you don't have a tissue handy, cough or sneeze into your elbow or upper arm.
- Perform hand hygiene after coughing, sneezing or using tissues

## **7. Aseptic technique**

- Use aseptic technique to prevent micro-organisms being introduced into a susceptible site by hands, equipment and the environment.

## **8. Waste management**

- Segregate waste at the point of generation and contain it into the appropriate colour coded and labelled receptacle.

## **9. Linen management**

- Handle used linen in a manner that will prevent microorganism dispersal
- Wear PPE where appropriate when handling linen soiled with blood or body fluids.