

## Lesson 51: Medical Asepsis (Clean Technique)

### I. Introduction

- A. **Medical asepsis** is the state of being free from disease causing microorganisms. Medical asepsis is concerned with eliminating the spread of microorganisms through facility practices.
- B. Essential components of maintaining medical asepsis in a facility include:
  - 1. handwashing
  - 2. utilizing gloves, gown and mask as indicated
  - 3. cleaning equipment
  - 4. handling linens in ways that prevent germs from spreading
- C. Medical asepsis protects both residents and caregivers from becoming ill.
- D. Health care facilities have infection control policies and procedures which personnel must follow in an attempt to control the spread of germs/infection. You will need to become familiar with these policies.
- E. The scientific term for germs is microorganisms. Microorganisms are:
  - 1. too small to be seen
  - 2. located everywhere
    - a. in the air
    - b. in the water
    - c. in food
    - d. in clothes
- F. Not all microorganisms are harmful. Some are used to make medications such as penicillin.
- G. Microorganisms can be spread by:
  - 1. touching someone who has an infection.
  - 2. touching the linens or other belongings of a person who has an infection.
  - 3. sneezing or coughing
  - 4. handling or consuming contaminated food, medications or water.
- H. Medical aseptic practices are involved in all nursing activities because microorganisms are always present in the environment. An awareness of how microorganisms are transmitted is essential for safe caregiving practices.

### II. Isolation procedures are used when a resident may have a disease that is easily spread from one person to another.

- A. Be sure to learn the isolation procedures of your facility. Under the system of Standard Precautions, types of isolation include:
  - 1. Contact Isolation - for C-difficile, conjunctivitis, MRSA, etc.
  - 2. Droplet Isolation - for influenza, pneumonia, streptococcal disease, etc.
  - 3. Airborne Isolation - for tuberculosis
- B. If a resident is placed in strict isolation, he/she is placed in a separate room to prevent others from becoming infected.
  - 1. Care providers and visitors will be required to wear a gown, mask and gloves before entering the resident's room.
  - 2. All linen and other items that come in contact with this resident will be given special handling in order to avoid spreading germs.
- C. Residents who are vulnerable to infection may be placed in reverse isolation.
  - 1. The resident is isolated in order to protect him/her from contracting a disease from others.
  - 2. Remember, residents who are in reverse isolation may feel alone and will need extra reassurance.

### III. Aseptic Technique Used When Providing Care and Treatment

- A. When administering medications and when performing procedures
  - 1. Wash your hands or utilize alcohol foam/gel before and after administering medications or performing a treatment.
  - 2. Review the policies and procedures of your facility for the use of hand foam/gel for hand

sanitization.

#### IV. Handwashing

A. Review Handwashing/Standard Precautions

B. Procedure for handwashing includes:

1. Turn on faucet with a clean paper towel.
2. Adjust water to acceptable temperature.
3. Put soap on hands.
4. Lather all areas of hands and wrists, rubbing vigorously for at least 10 seconds.
5. Clean nails by rubbing them in palm of other hand.
6. Rinse thoroughly, running water down from wrists to fingertips.
7. Pat dry with paper towel.
8. Turn off faucet with paper towel and discard towel immediately.

C. Important Considerations:

1. Faucets may be operated either by knee control, foot pedal or hand levers. These are the three types of faucets commonly found in health care facilities.
2. Use warm water. Hot or cold water tends to dry the skin.
3. Once you begin washing your hands, do not touch the sink, faucets, counters or your clothing. If you touch anything that is not aseptic, your hands will become contaminated and you must start over again.
4. Be cautious not to get your uniform wet while you are washing your hands in that when it is wet, it is more susceptible to carry microorganisms.
5. Most soaps found in your home and in health care facilities are non-antiseptic soaps. These do not kill pathogens but only help loosen them so that you can rinse them away. When you wash with a non-antiseptic soap, you must use friction and rotary motions to help loosen and remove pathogens. You must also rinse thoroughly in that any pathogens remaining on your hands will recontaminate them. Antiseptic soaps kill many microorganisms.
6. Point your hands and wrists downward as you rinse to prevent the soap from running back onto the clean part of your hands and recontaminating them.
7. If there are hand levers on the sinks, use the last paper towel you used to dry your hands to turn off the faucet. The water on the paper towel provides a water barrier between your clean hands and the dirty faucet.

#### V. Cleaning Equipment

A. The facility will have cleaning policies and procedures addressing the disinfecting of common use equipment shared by multiple residents (e.g., shower chairs, bedpans, etc.).

B. Each caregiver must be knowledgeable of solutions/chemicals to be used as well as correct use (i.e., length of time necessary to soak, etc.) in an effort to prevent the spread of harmful microorganisms.

#### VI. Linens

A. Soiled linens are to be contained at the source.

B. Clean linens must be carried away from the uniform of the caregiver to prevent potential contamination.

C. Linens are to be stored and transported in a manner to prevent the spread of harmful microorganisms.

<b>NOTES:</b>

