

## *A Brief Look at Infection Control*

No matter how you look at it, infections are nasty! An infection is an invasion of the body by pathogenic microorganisms which we usually call “bugs.” These “bugs” can cause a variety of symptoms such as redness, swelling, pain and/or fever.

Infections can be transmitted in three ways:

- Direct contact - touching blood or other body fluids
- Indirect contact - touching items that have infectious material on them such as bed linens, bedpans, drinking glasses, etc.
- Vectors - by flies, mosquitoes or other insects that are carrying the “bug.”

Three things have to be present in this vicious circle in order to spread an infection:

- An infectious agent such as a virus, bacterium or fungus;
- A susceptible host such as one who is in a weakened condition or is ill; and,
- A chain of transmission for the infectious agent to move to the susceptible host.

Remember that the most important thing for you to do is to prevent the spread of infection from you to the patient or the patient to you which could then go on to those around you. You must do everything you can to prevent the spread of infection.

- If you have a cold or other infection, check with your supervisor who will determine if job duties can be performed without risk to the patient according to Agency Policies.
- If you learn that the patient has an infection, report it to your supervisor.
- Learn everything you can about preventing the spread of infections.
- ALWAYS PRACTICE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS.
  - Wash your hands
  - Wear gloves when there is a reasonable chance you will come into contact with blood or other body fluids
  - Wear gloves if you have any open areas on your hands
  - Use personal protective equipment when there is a reasonable chance you will come into contact with blood, other body fluid or airborne “bugs”
  - Clean and disinfect any surface which has come in contact with blood, other body fluids or could be exposed to airborne “bugs”
  - Dispose of infected materials per Agency Policies
  - If appropriate to your job duties, follow Agency Policies for blood collection and transportation of lab specimens
  - If it’s appropriate to your job position, document according to Agency Policies.

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### **Quiz**

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Graded By (RN): \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Infections can be transmitted in three ways: direct contact, indirect contact and vectors.
  - a) True
  - b) False
2. Three things have to be present in the vicious circle of spreading an infection: an infectious agent, a susceptible host and a chain of transmission.
  - a) True
  - b) False
3. You must do everything you can to prevent the spread of infection.
  - a) True
  - b) False
4. If it's appropriate to your job description, document according to Agency Policies.
  - a) True
  - b) False