

MARSHALL MEDICAL CENTERS

INFECTION CONTROL ORIENTATION LETTER

Welcome to Marshall Health System where we care about people. To provide a safe environment for patients, employees, and visitors, we want you to know about our Infection Control program and what you can do to be safe while working here. All people, healthy or sick, have the capacity to spread germs that cause illness. In general, healthy people can fight off many germs, whereas sick people often can not. Germs that may cause disease are called pathogens, and may be spread from one person to another by contact with blood or body fluid that may contain these pathogens. In some cases, pathogens are transferred by contact with skin, clothes, linen, or even environmental items that have not been cleaned properly. In a few cases, pathogens may be inhaled in the air you breathe. For these reasons, we utilize work practices known as Standard Precautions, which means that we treat all patients and potentially contaminated objects as if they are infectious and may transmit disease.

➤➤➤➤ **IMPORTANT PRACTICES TO REMEMBER** ⚡⚡⚡⚡

WASH YOUR HANDS

1. Before and after your shift, and regularly throughout your shift
2. Before and after physical contact with each patient
3. After handling contaminated items (such as bedpans, dressings, linen, patient's items, etc.)
4. Before putting on and after removing protective clothing, including gloves.
5. After using the toilet, blowing your nose, covering a sneeze/cough, etc.
6. Whenever hands become obviously soiled or dirty
7. Before eating, drinking, or handling food

ALCOHOL HAND CLEANING PRODUCTS – These hand decontamination products are available in several locations throughout the hospital in foam canisters for the convenience of healthcare workers as well as patients. These products are very effective at decreasing the amount of germs that may exist on your hands at any given time, and can destroy germs that you have inadvertently picked up on your hands throughout the day. Because they do not contain a surfactant such as soap, they cannot remove blood, C-diff or visible soiling which requires soap and water; but they are extremely useful for routine hand cleaning when you are moving from room to room and do not notice visible soiling or contamination. **THEY ARE VERY KIND ON YOUR HANDS ...TRY THEM ...YOU'LL LIKE THEM!**

ARTIFICIAL NAIL ENHANCERS – Nail enhancers are prohibited in areas where you may have direct patient contact, supervise patient care or have contact with patient care supplies, equipment or food. This includes overlays, acrylics, tips, gels, ect. Artificial fingernail enhancements contribute to nail changes that can increase the risk of colonization and transmission of pathogens to patients. Each employee has a responsibility for maintaining hand hygiene, which includes the removal of artificial fingernail enhancements and trimming long, natural nails, as defined by the policy. Nails should not extend past the fingertips. See Infection Control Artificial Fingernail Guidelines for more details.

WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING

Gloves—wear gloves any time you touch blood, body fluids, mucous membranes, or broken skin. Change gloves between patients and any time you have touched contaminated surfaces and will be touching a clean surface. Wash hands before and after placing on new gloves. Do not wear gloves for extended periods of time without changing.

Gowns—wear disposable gowns any time you might get blood or body fluids on your clothes; also wear gowns for close contact with patients, as in turning and assisting with moving.

Masks, Eye covers, Face shields—wear these during procedures where you might get blood or body fluids splashed into your eyes or mouth; such as intubation, using syringes, irrigation, etc.

TB Masks—if you have to enter an area specified as Airborne Precautions (usually respiratory precautions for tuberculosis), you must be fit tested for the appropriate mask to protect you from inhalation of these germs. If in doubt about this issue, please ask the charge nurse or employee health.

CHLORHEXIDINE GLUCONATE (CHG) – The following patients will receive a daily CHG bath: all patients in ICU, patients on above standard precautions and patients with a CVL. Surgical patients will receive a pre-op CHG bath the day before and day of surgery

NEEDLES or SHARP INSTRUMENTS

If you are not trained in safe handling of sharps, you should not handle them. The hospital has designated containers in which to place sharps and contaminated items, disposable and re-usable.

CLEAN vs CONTAMINATED

You must comply with rules regarding designated “clean” areas and “dirty” (contaminated) areas. Clean equipment can only be placed in “clean” areas. Contaminated items can only be placed in “dirty” areas. Any items taken to a patient room are never to be removed to a clean area or used on another patient. All garbage receptacles are considered contaminated.

GENERAL POINTERS

1. Be alert for signs of infection or contamination.
2. Avoid unnecessary contacts.
3. Do not handle sterile equipment unless you have been instructed how to do so.
4. Do not work around patients or your co-workers if you know you have a contagious illness.
5. **DO NOT** be afraid to ask questions!

ISOLATION PRECAUTIONS

Under special circumstances, the physicians or nurses may determine the need to take additional precautions (above that of standard precautions). In these cases, a patient room will be labeled with a special precautions sign addressing what type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is required before entering the room. You may need to get directions from the patient’s charge nurse before entering these rooms. The signs give some general descriptions of extra precautions that may be necessary to prevent spread of a contagious condition. If you are not sure, please ask questions.

EXPOSURES

If at any time you feel you have been directly exposed to a contagious illness, you should report this or ask questions if you are not sure. If you are cut or punctured by a contaminated sharp or needle or if you have blood or body fluid contact to your mouth, eyes, or open wounds, you must report this to a supervisor, infection preventionist or head nurse. (As with all inquiries, you must maintain confidentiality about patients and information should be shared only with the appropriate supervisors). NOTE: If you have not seen the employee health nurse or have not acquired immunity from chicken pox, do not enter a room of a patient that has shingles or chicken pox.

FINALLY

Thank you for studying this and know that these practices will protect you and patients.

Remember that HANDWASHING and Hand Decontamination is very important!

Tara Mattox, RN
Infection Preventionist, South Facility
(256)840-3343

Gloria Clemons, RN CIC
Infection Preventionist, North Facility
(256)571-8045