

Chain of Transmission and Risk Assessment

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Administrative Controls	Managerial measures put in place in the health care setting to reduce the risk of infection to staff or to clients/patients/residents.
Body Fluid	Includes blood, body fluids (e.g., cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid), secretions (e.g., saliva, semen) or excretions (e.g., urine, faeces).
Control of the Environment	Physical or mechanical measures put in place in the health care facility to reduce the risk of infection to health care providers or patients.
Environment of the Client/Patient/Resident	The immediate space around a client/patient/resident that may be touched by the client/patient/resident and may also be touched by the health care provider when providing care.
Engineering Controls	Physical or mechanical measures put in place in the acute care facility to reduce the risk of infection to staff or patients.
Facial Protection	Personal protective equipment that protect the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth from splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions. Facial protection may include a mask or respirator in conjunction with eye protection, or a face shield that covers eyes, nose and mouth.
Hand Hygiene	A general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using an alcohol-based hand rub or soap and running water.
Health Care Provider	Any person delivering care to a client/patient/resident. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: emergency service workers, physicians, dentists, nurses, respiratory therapists and other health professionals, personal support workers, clinical instructors, students and home health care workers. In some non-acute settings, volunteers might provide care and would be included as health care providers. See also, <i>Staff</i> .
Health Care Provider Controls	Measures to be used by an individual to protect themselves or their patients, co-workers and visitors from acquiring an infection. They are the measures that the health care provider can and should use, based on the personal risk assessment, when other controls may be absent or do not completely eliminate the risk.

Term	Definition
Hierarchy of Controls	The hierarchy of controls is a 'model' for hazard control. The hierarchy of controls describes control measures for any hazard as being directed either at the source of the hazard, along the path to the workers, or at the workers themselves. The use of the hierarchy of controls for any hazard is considered a best practice when dealing with the hazards of infectious agents.
Infectious Agent	A microorganism, i.e., a bacterium, fungus, parasite, virus or prion, which is capable of invading body tissues and multiplying.
Microorganism	A microscopic form of life that cannot be seen with the naked eye and which might cause infection.
Mode of Transmission	The method by which Infectious Agents spread from one person to another (e.g., contact, droplet or airborne routes).
Organizational Risk Assessment	An evaluation done by the organization or facility in order to implement controls to mitigate identified risks.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Clothing or equipment worn by staff for personal protection against hazards.
Personal Risk Assessment	A risk assessment done by an individual prior to, or during, care.
Point-of-care	The place where three elements occur together: the client/patient/resident, the health care provider and care or treatment involving client/patient/resident contact.
Portal of Entry	How an infectious agent enters the body. In the Chain of Transmission, this includes mucous membranes, respiratory system, gastrointestinal system, and broken skin.
Portal of Exit	How a potential infectious agent leaves the body. In the Chain of Transmission, this includes blood, secretions, excretions, and skin.
Reservoir	An animate or inanimate source where microorganisms can survive and multiply (e.g., water, food, people).

Term	Definition
Respiratory Etiquette	Personal practices that help prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause acute respiratory infections (e.g., covering the mouth when coughing, care when disposing of tissues)
Risk Assessment	An evaluation of the interaction of the health care provider, the patient and the environment to assess the risk of acquiring or transmitting infection, in order to know what controls to implement.
Routine Practices	The infection prevention and control practices that must be used routinely during all activities to reduce the infection risks to you and to your patients and to control the transmission of microorganisms in all health care settings.
Staff	Anyone conducting activities in settings where health care is provided, including but not limited to, health care providers. See also, <i>Health Care Providers</i> .
Susceptible Host	An individual who is at risk for infection. Examples include individuals with diabetes, chronic illnesses, immunosuppression, and organ transplant recipients.