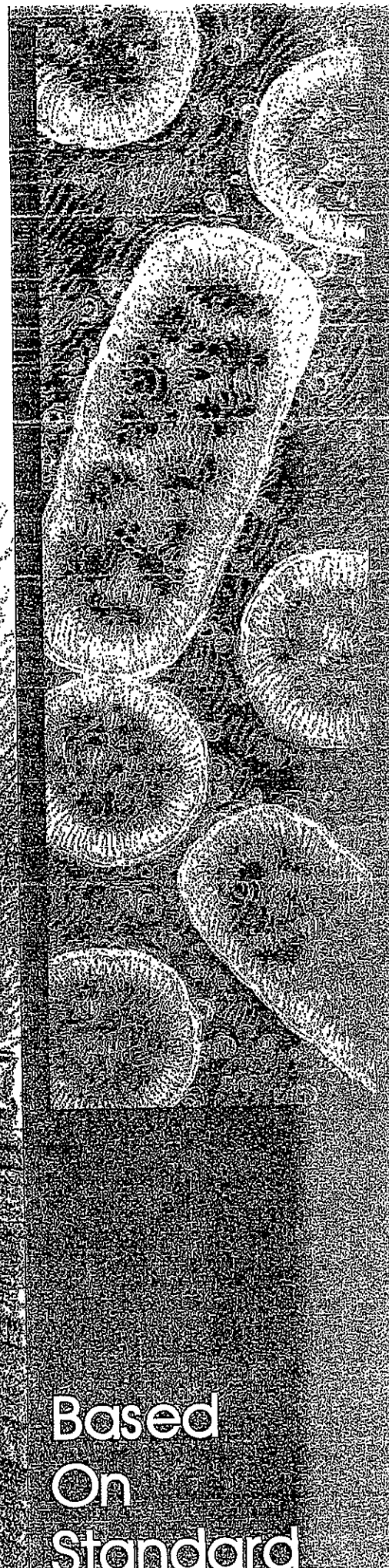
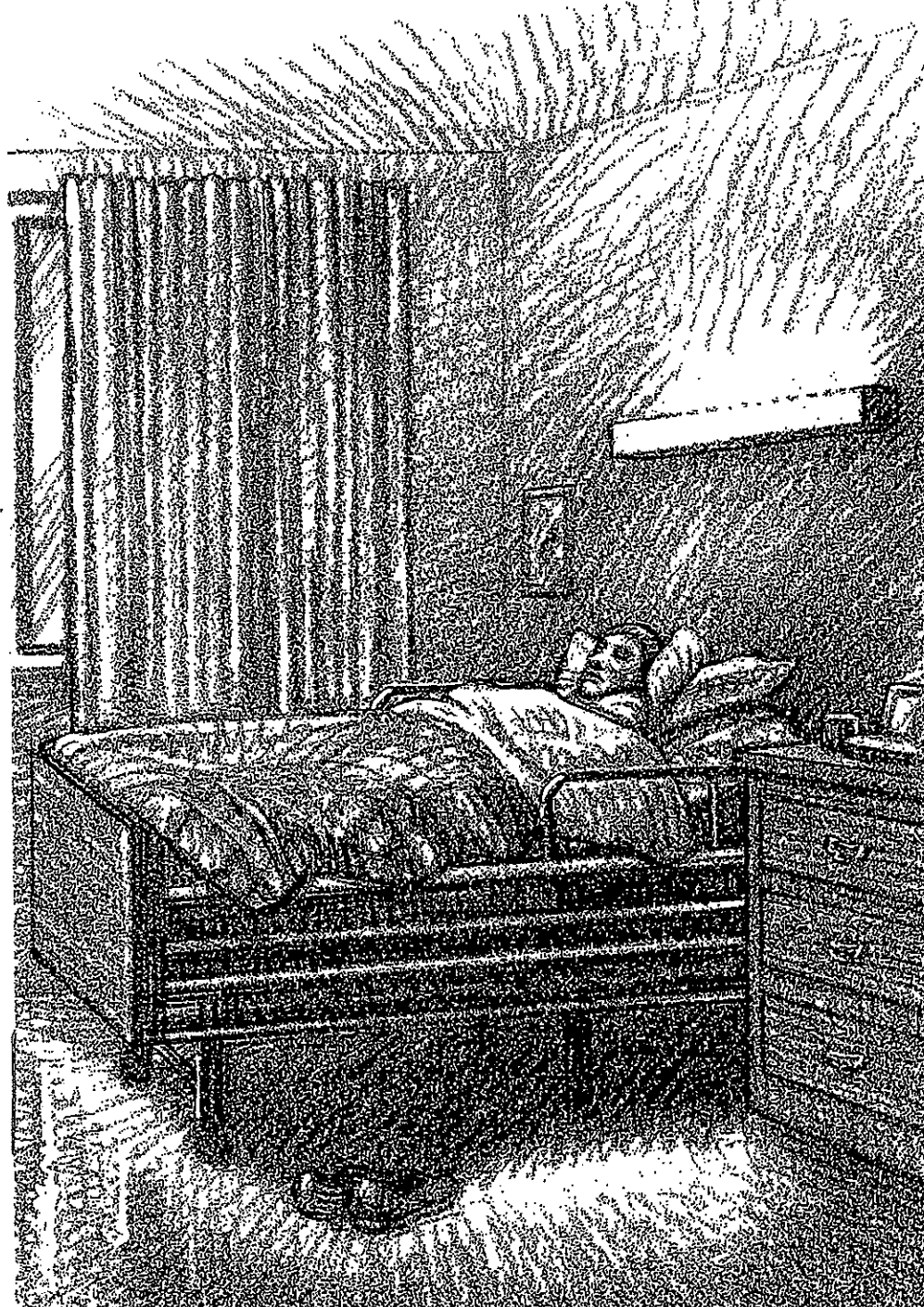


# *Infection Control*

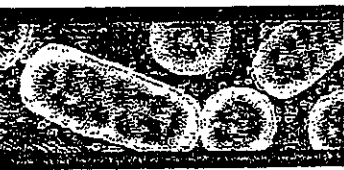
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## ORIENTATION



Based  
On  
Standard

# General Infection Control



The risk of acquiring an infection in healthcare facilities has increased in recent years for both patients and staff. As a healthcare worker, you must recognize that these threats underscore the fundamental truth that using proper infection control practices is one of your most important job responsibilities.

Infection control practices are easy to ignore because they can be so elementary. Researchers at one hospital found that only 48 percent of staff in the intensive care units washed their hands before examining patients even though they knew they were being watched as part of a research project.

Take time and make the effort required to consistently follow infection control procedures — because these procedures are crucial for protecting your patients and yourself from infection.



## HOSTS

To become a host, a person must be susceptible to the infectious organism. A person exposed to an infectious organism will not necessarily become a host because some people are immune to or able to resist the infection. Unfortunately, healthcare facilities have many different kind of patients who can become hosts. People particularly susceptible to infection include:

- Elderly patients
- Newborns
- Persons with weak or undeveloped immune systems
- Persons with cancer, multiple health problems or chronic diseases that require steroid therapy
- Patients with surgical incisions, catheters, breathing tubes and other medically-induced pathways into the body that can allow microorganisms to enter a host's body.



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# Infection Control Methods: Standard Precautions



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, effective infection control programs have two levels: Standard Precautions and Transmission-Based Precautions.

Since there is no quick, surefire method of determining which patients may carry an infectious disease, Standard Precautions require that you treat all patients as though they may be infected. Standard Precautions combine the major features of:

- Universal Precautions — which reduce the risk of transmitting bloodborne pathogens
- Body-Substance Isolation — which reduces the risk of transmitting pathogens from moist body substances.

In other words, use Standard Precautions every time you anticipate contact with blood, all body fluids, secretions and excretions, nonintact skin and mucous membranes. Standard Precautions cover all healthcare workers whether giving direct-patient care or working in support areas, like maintenance and housekeeping.

Standard Precautions outline a system of safeguards to help you protect yourself from infections such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV, while also protecting your patients from infectious organisms transmitted from patient to patient by healthcare workers. Your employer has policies using Standard Precautions, including:

- Protective work practices
- Use of personal protective equipment
- Protective housekeeping
- Protection through the hepatitis B vaccination
- Exposure reporting.



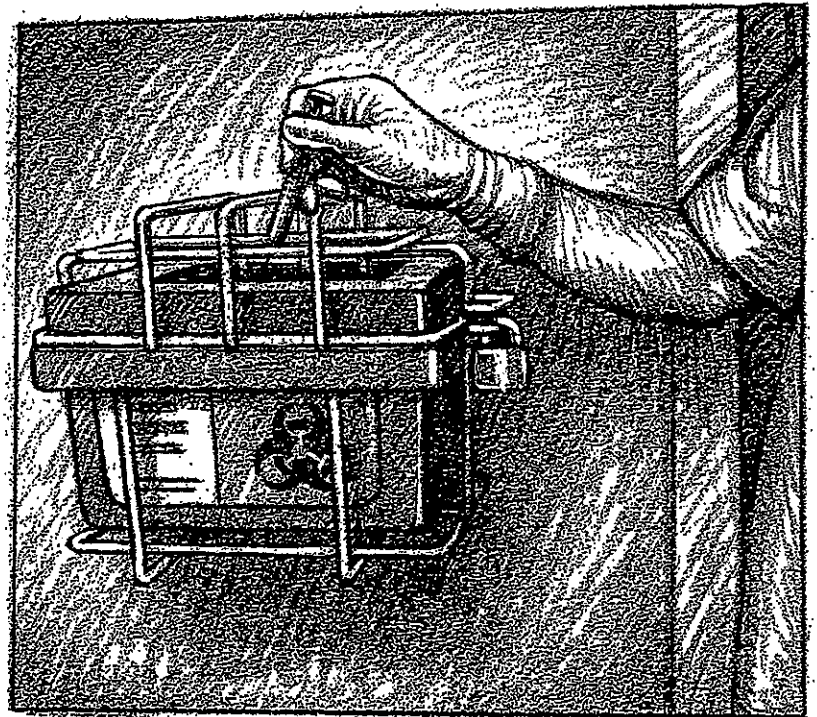
### *Practice Good Hygiene*

- Minimize splashing, spraying or spattering when performing procedures involving blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke, apply cosmetics or lip balms, or handle contact lenses where there is a reasonable chance you might be exposed to blood or body fluids.
- Do not keep food and drink in places where blood or other potentially infectious materials are present.

### *Handle Sharps with Care*

Prevent injuries from needles and other sharp instruments when using, cleaning or disposing of them.

- Safer medical devices, such as sharps with engineered sharps injury protections and needleless systems are now required.
- Never bend, recap or break needles after use.
- Dispose of contaminated sharps in appropriate puncture-resistant containers immediately after use.



### **PPE**

Personal protective equipment (PPE) protects you from infection hazards — when worn properly. PPE includes gloves, fluid-resistant gowns or aprons, faceshields, protective eyewear and masks, resuscitation bags or other ventilation devices.

PPE must be appropriate for your task. Wear as much or as little PPE as you need to keep blood or other potentially infectious materials from getting on your clothing, skin or mucous membranes.

**For example:** If you anticipate skin exposure only to your hands, you need to wear gloves.

### *Protection During Resuscitation*

Since a patient may expel saliva, blood or other fluids which could contain infectious materials, avoid unprotected mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Instead, use mechanical emergency respiratory devices and pocket masks designed to isolate you from contact with potentially infectious substances.



### *General Rules for PPE Use*

- Always inspect your protective equipment before, during and after use.
- Clean and maintain PPE properly. Repair or discard any equipment that is flawed or damaged.
- Replace PPE as soon as possible if it's penetrated by blood or other potentially infectious materials.
- Always remove PPE before leaving the work area and place it in a designated receptacle for disposal, laundering or processing.
- Remove PPE carefully to avoid contamination of clothing and skin. Remove PPE in the proper order — gown and other protective clothing before gloves.

Your employer also provides equipment necessary to eliminate infectious hazards at their source, such as autoclaves, sharps disposal containers, self-sheathing needles and needleless systems.



# Infection Control Methods: Transmission-Based Precautions



To prevent the spread of certain highly infectious or drug-resistant organisms, a second level of precautions, Transmission-Based Precautions, must be used in addition to Standard Precautions. Categories of Transmission-Based Precautions include:

- Airborne
- Droplet
- Contact.

## *Airborne Precautions*

To prevent airborne contamination:

- Place patients in private, negative air flow isolation rooms
- Cohort by grouping those actively infected with the same microorganisms
- Keep patient room door closed
- Wear the appropriate mask or respirator when entering patient room
- Move the patient from the room for essential purposes only
- Patient wears a mask outside the room.

## *Droplet Transmission:*

- Happens when a droplet carries germs from an infected person to someone else
- This usually occurs from a cough, sneeze, etc.
- To protect yourself against Droplet Transmission, sit or stand more than an arm's length away from a coughing or sneezing person
- Teach patients to do the same
- Another option is to cover cough or sneeze with a bent elbow
- You can also teach patients to do this.

## *Contact Transmission:*

- Can happen when you touch a client's skin, shake hands or even when you touch a contaminated doorknob.
- Then, without washing your hands, you touch another client, co-worker or yourself.
- Gloves are the minimum required.
- Sometimes gowns are required as well if you expect significant patient contact.

Your employer has detailed policies and procedures that should be followed when Transmission-Based Precautions are required.