

Infection Control

Infection Control: The purpose of infection control is to reduce the occurrence of infectious diseases. These diseases are usually caused by bacteria or viruses and can be spread by human to human contact, animal to human contact, human contact with an infected surface, airborne transmission through tiny droplets of infectious agents suspended in the air, and finally, by such common vehicles as food or water. Diseases that are spread from animals to humans are known as zoonosis; animals that carry disease agents from one host to another are known as vectors.

Infection control has become a formal discipline in the United States since the 1950s, due to the spread of staphylococcal infections in hospitals. Because there is both the risk of health care providers acquiring infections themselves, and of them passing infections on to patients, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) established guidelines for infection control procedures. In addition to hospitals, infection control is important in nursing homes, clinics, child care centers, and restaurants, as well as in the home.

Influenza

The seasonal flu (influenza) is a contagious disease that is caused by the influenza virus. It attacks the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs) in humans. The flu is contagious. A person can spread the flu starting one day before they feel sick. Adults can continue to pass the flu virus to others for another three seven days after symptoms start. Children can pass the virus for longer than seven days. Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. Some people can be infected with the flu virus, but have no symptoms. During this time, those people can still spread the virus to others. The flu is different from a cold; it usually comes on suddenly and can include the following symptoms:

100+ degree temperature
Muscle aches
Chills
Extreme fatigue

Precautions

If a person has any of the influenza-like symptoms, they should refrain from exposing themselves to others in an effort to prevent the possible spread of illness.

The CDC recommends annual vaccination as the best tool for influenza prevention.

Hand washing is very effective in preventing the spread of the flu virus. Hand washing involves four simple and effective steps you can take to reduce the spread of illness so you can stay healthy.

- Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.