
Global Certificate Course in Hospital Housekeeping

Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

Cleaning and disinfection practices are vital components of maintaining a safe and healthy environment in hospital settings. Understanding key terms and vocabulary related to these practices is essential for hospital housekeeping staff to effectively carry out their duties. In this section, we will delve into the important terms and concepts that are crucial for the Global Certificate Course in Hospital Housekeeping.

****Cleaning:****

Cleaning is the process of removing visible dirt, dust, and debris from surfaces using physical scrubbing, wiping, or vacuuming. It is a crucial step before disinfection, as it helps to eliminate pathogens and reduce the risk of infection. Cleaning products such as detergents and soaps are used to break down and remove dirt and grime from surfaces.

****Disinfection:****

Disinfection is the process of killing or inactivating microorganisms on surfaces to reduce the risk of infection. Disinfectants are chemical agents that are applied to surfaces after cleaning to destroy harmful bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Different disinfectants have varying effectiveness against different types of pathogens.

****Sterilization:****

Sterilization is the process of killing all microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and spores, on surfaces or medical equipment. Sterilization is typically used for critical medical instruments and equipment that come into contact with sterile body tissues or the bloodstream. Methods of sterilization include steam autoclaving, ethylene oxide gas, and hydrogen peroxide plasma.

****Antiseptic:****

Antiseptics are disinfectants that are safe to use on human skin or mucous membranes to prevent infection. Antiseptics are commonly used in healthcare settings to clean wounds, surgical sites, and catheter insertion points. Examples of antiseptics include alcohol-based hand sanitizers, iodine solutions, and chlorhexidine.

****Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):****

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) refers to protective clothing, gloves, masks, and other gear worn by healthcare workers to protect themselves from exposure to infectious agents. PPE is essential when performing cleaning and disinfection tasks to prevent the transmission of pathogens. Examples of PPE include disposable gloves, gowns, face shields, and respirators.

****Biohazard:****

A biohazard is a biological substance that poses a threat to human health or the environment. Biohazards include blood, bodily fluids, infectious agents, and medical waste. Proper handling and disposal of biohazardous materials are essential to prevent the spread of infections and protect healthcare workers and patients.

****Cross-Contamination:****

Cross-contamination occurs when harmful microorganisms are transferred from one surface to another, leading to the spread of infection. Cross-contamination can occur through direct contact, airborne transmission, or contact with contaminated equipment or surfaces. Proper cleaning and disinfection practices are essential to prevent cross-contamination in healthcare settings.

****Standard Precautions:****

Standard Precautions are infection prevention practices recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious agents in healthcare settings. Standard Precautions include hand hygiene, the use of PPE, safe injection practices, and environmental cleaning and disinfection. Adhering to Standard Precautions is essential for protecting healthcare workers and patients from infections.

****Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs):****

Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAIs) are infections that patients acquire during the course of receiving healthcare treatment in a hospital or other healthcare facility. HAIs can be caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi, or other pathogens and can lead to serious complications, prolonged hospital stays, and increased healthcare costs. Proper cleaning and disinfection practices are essential for preventing HAIs in healthcare settings.

****High-Touch Surfaces:****

High-touch surfaces are surfaces in healthcare settings that are frequently touched by multiple people and are at a higher risk of contamination with pathogens. Examples of high-touch surfaces include doorknobs, light switches, handrails, bedside tables, and medical equipment. Regular cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces are essential to prevent the spread of infections.

****Environmental Services:****

Environmental services refer to the department in a healthcare facility responsible for cleaning, disinfecting, and maintaining the physical environment. Environmental services staff play a critical role in preventing infections and ensuring a safe and clean healthcare environment for patients, visitors, and healthcare workers. Proper training and supervision of environmental services staff are essential to maintain high standards of cleanliness and infection control.

****Cleaning Schedule:****

A cleaning schedule is a plan that outlines the frequency and methods for cleaning and disinfecting different areas and surfaces in a healthcare facility. Cleaning schedules should be tailored to the specific needs of the facility, taking into account high-risk areas, patient populations, and infection control guidelines. Regular monitoring and auditing of cleaning practices are essential to ensure compliance with the cleaning schedule and maintain a clean and safe environment.

****Chemical Safety:****

Chemical safety refers to the safe handling, storage, and use of cleaning and disinfecting chemicals in healthcare settings. Cleaning and disinfecting chemicals can be hazardous if not used properly, leading to skin irritation, respiratory problems, or other health risks. Proper training, labeling, and storage of chemicals

are essential to ensure the safety of healthcare workers and patients.

****Quality Assurance:****

Quality assurance is a systematic process for evaluating and improving the quality of cleaning and disinfection practices in healthcare settings. Quality assurance measures may include regular inspections, audits, staff training, and feedback mechanisms to identify areas for improvement and ensure compliance with infection control standards. Quality assurance programs are essential for maintaining high standards of cleanliness and patient safety.

****Infection Control:****

Infection control is the discipline that aims to prevent the spread of infections in healthcare settings through the implementation of policies, procedures, and practices. Infection control measures include hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, isolation precautions, vaccination, and surveillance of healthcare-associated infections. Infection control is essential for protecting patients, healthcare workers, and visitors from healthcare-associated infections.

****Terminal Cleaning:****

Terminal cleaning is the thorough cleaning and disinfection of patient rooms and other areas after a patient with an infectious disease has been discharged. Terminal cleaning aims to remove all traces of the infectious agent and reduce the risk of transmission to subsequent patients or healthcare workers. Terminal cleaning protocols should be followed rigorously to prevent the spread of infections in healthcare settings.

****Outbreak Management:****

Outbreak management refers to the coordinated response to an outbreak of infectious diseases in a healthcare setting. Outbreak management involves identifying the source of the outbreak, implementing infection control measures, isolating affected patients, and communicating with healthcare staff and patients. Prompt and effective outbreak management is essential to contain the spread of infections and protect the health and safety of patients and healthcare workers.

****Cleaning Validation:****

Cleaning validation is the process of verifying that cleaning and disinfection procedures are effective in removing pathogens and residues from surfaces. Cleaning validation may involve visual inspection, microbial testing, or chemical analysis to ensure that cleaning and disinfection practices meet established standards. Regular cleaning validation is essential to maintain a high level of cleanliness and infection control in healthcare settings.

****Biological Indicators:****

Biological indicators are test organisms used to monitor the effectiveness of sterilization processes, such as steam autoclaving or ethylene oxide gas sterilization. Biological indicators contain highly resistant spores that are more challenging to kill than typical pathogens. Monitoring biological indicators provides assurance that sterilization processes are working effectively to eliminate harmful microorganisms.

****Cleaning Equipment:****

Cleaning equipment refers to tools and devices used to clean and disinfect surfaces in healthcare settings.

Common cleaning equipment includes mops, buckets, microfiber cloths, sponges, brushes, and vacuum cleaners. Proper maintenance and use of cleaning equipment are essential to ensure effective cleaning and disinfection and prevent the spread of infections.

****Chemical Disinfection:****

Chemical disinfection is the use of disinfectants, such as quaternary ammonium compounds, bleach, or hydrogen peroxide, to kill or inactivate pathogens on surfaces. Chemical disinfection is a common method for reducing the risk of infection in healthcare settings. Different disinfectants have varying effectiveness against different types of pathogens and surfaces.

****Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI):****

Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) is a disinfection method that uses ultraviolet (UV) light to kill or inactivate microorganisms on surfaces and in the air. UVGI is commonly used in healthcare settings to disinfect patient rooms, operating rooms, and other high-risk areas. Proper installation and monitoring of UVGI systems are essential to ensure effective disinfection and protect healthcare workers and patients.

****Steam Sterilization:****

Steam sterilization is a method of sterilizing medical instruments and equipment using high-temperature steam under pressure. Steam sterilization is a highly effective and reliable method for killing all microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and spores. Proper loading, monitoring, and maintenance of steam sterilizers are essential to ensure the sterilization of medical devices.

****Chemical Sterilization:****

Chemical sterilization is a method of sterilizing medical instruments and equipment using chemical agents, such as ethylene oxide gas or hydrogen peroxide plasma. Chemical sterilization is suitable for heat-sensitive or moisture-sensitive instruments that cannot be sterilized using steam. Proper handling and ventilation are essential to ensure the safe and effective use of chemical sterilization methods.

****Terminal Disinfection:****

Terminal disinfection is the final step in the cleaning and disinfection process of a healthcare facility at the end of a work shift or day. Terminal disinfection involves thorough cleaning and disinfection of all patient rooms, common areas, and high-touch surfaces to prevent the spread of infections. Terminal disinfection protocols should be followed consistently to maintain a clean and safe healthcare environment.

****Spaulding Classification:****

The Spaulding Classification is a system that categorizes medical devices and equipment based on their risk of infection and the level of disinfection or sterilization required. The Spaulding Classification divides medical devices into critical, semi-critical, and non-critical categories, each requiring different levels of cleaning, disinfection, or sterilization. Adhering to the Spaulding Classification is essential for ensuring the safe and effective reprocessing of medical devices.

****Aseptic Technique:****

Aseptic technique is a set of practices and procedures used to prevent contamination of sterile areas or objects during medical procedures. Aseptic technique involves proper hand hygiene, wearing sterile gloves,

using sterile instruments and supplies, and maintaining a sterile field. Aseptic technique is essential for preventing infections during invasive medical procedures, such as surgery, catheter insertion, or wound care.

****Cleaning Validation:****

Cleaning validation is the process of verifying that cleaning and disinfection procedures are effective in removing pathogens and residues from surfaces. Cleaning validation may involve visual inspection, microbial testing, or chemical analysis to ensure that cleaning and disinfection practices meet established standards. Regular cleaning validation is essential to maintain a high level of cleanliness and infection control in healthcare settings.

****Microfiber Cloths:****

Microfiber cloths are cleaning tools made from synthetic fibers that are highly effective at trapping dirt, dust, and microorganisms. Microfiber cloths are commonly used in healthcare settings for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces due to their superior cleaning ability and durability. Proper use and laundering of microfiber cloths are essential to prevent cross-contamination and maintain a clean and safe environment.

****Biofilm:****

Biofilm is a complex community of microorganisms that adhere to surfaces and form a protective matrix of extracellular polymeric substances. Biofilms can form on medical devices, equipment, or environmental surfaces in healthcare settings and are resistant to cleaning and disinfection. Biofilm removal requires specialized cleaning and disinfection techniques to eliminate the source of infection.

****Infection Prevention and Control (IPC):****

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) is a comprehensive approach to preventing the spread of infections in healthcare settings through the implementation of policies, procedures, and practices. IPC measures include hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, personal protective equipment, isolation precautions, and surveillance of healthcare-associated infections. IPC is essential for protecting patients, healthcare workers, and visitors from healthcare-associated infections.

****Terminal Cleaning:****

Terminal cleaning is the thorough cleaning and disinfection of patient rooms and other areas after a patient with an infectious disease has been discharged. Terminal cleaning aims to remove all traces of the infectious agent and reduce the risk of transmission to subsequent patients or healthcare workers. Terminal cleaning protocols should be followed rigorously to prevent the spread of infections in healthcare settings.

****Chlorine Dioxide:****

Chlorine dioxide is a powerful disinfectant that is effective against a wide range of pathogens, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Chlorine dioxide is commonly used in healthcare settings for disinfecting surfaces, medical equipment, and water. Proper dilution and application of chlorine dioxide are essential to ensure effective disinfection and prevent the development of antimicrobial resistance.

****Cleaning Validation:****

Cleaning validation is the process of verifying that cleaning and disinfection procedures are effective in

removing pathogens and residues from surfaces. Cleaning validation may involve visual inspection, microbial testing, or chemical analysis to ensure that cleaning and disinfection practices meet established standards. Regular cleaning validation is essential to maintain a high level of cleanliness and infection control in healthcare settings.

****Decontamination:****

Decontamination is the process of removing or neutralizing hazardous substances, such as chemicals, biological agents, or radioactive materials, to make them safe for handling, storage, or disposal. Decontamination methods may include cleaning, disinfection, sterilization, or other specialized techniques. Proper decontamination practices are essential to protect healthcare workers, patients, and the environment from harmful substances.

****Healthcare Waste Management:****

Healthcare waste management refers to the proper handling, segregation, storage, transportation, treatment, and disposal of healthcare waste generated in healthcare facilities. Healthcare waste includes infectious waste, sharps waste, pharmaceutical waste, and hazardous waste. Proper healthcare waste management practices are essential to prevent the spread of infections, protect the environment, and comply with regulatory requirements.

****Sharps Safety:****

Sharps safety refers to practices and devices designed to prevent needlestick injuries and other sharps injuries in healthcare settings. Sharps injuries can transmit bloodborne pathogens, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV, to healthcare workers. Sharps safety measures include using safety-engineered devices, safe needle disposal, and training healthcare workers on proper sharps handling techniques. Sharps safety is essential for protecting healthcare workers from occupational exposures to bloodborne pathogens.

****Healthcare Acquired Conditions (HACs):****

Healthcare Acquired Conditions (HACs) are adverse events or complications that patients develop during their hospital stay that were not present at the time of admission. HACs include infections, pressure ulcers, falls, and other preventable conditions that can lead to patient harm. Preventing HACs through effective cleaning, disinfection, and infection control practices is essential for improving patient safety and quality of care.

****Patient Isolation Precautions:****

Patient isolation precautions are infection control measures used to prevent the spread of infectious diseases from patients with known or suspected infections. Isolation precautions may include contact precautions, droplet precautions, airborne precautions, or protective isolation, depending on the mode of transmission of the infectious agent. Adhering to patient isolation precautions is essential for protecting healthcare workers, other patients, and visitors from healthcare-associated infections.

****Hand Hygiene:****

Hand hygiene is the practice of cleaning hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer to remove dirt, germs, and pathogens. Hand hygiene is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of infections in healthcare settings. Healthcare workers should perform hand hygiene before and after patient contact, after

touching contaminated surfaces, and before and after wearing gloves. Adhering to proper hand hygiene practices is essential for reducing healthcare-associated infections.

****Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):****

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is a federal agency that sets and enforces standards for workplace safety and health. OSHA regulations cover a wide range of topics, including bloodborne pathogens, hazardous chemicals, personal protective equipment, and infection control in healthcare settings. Compliance with OSHA regulations is essential for protecting healthcare workers from occupational hazards and ensuring a safe work environment.

****Environmental Cleaning:****

Environmental cleaning refers to the cleaning and disinfection of surfaces, equipment, and patient rooms in healthcare settings. Environmental cleaning is essential for preventing the spread of infections and maintaining a clean and safe healthcare environment. Proper cleaning techniques, use of appropriate cleaning products, and adherence to cleaning protocols are essential for effective environmental cleaning.

****Hazard Communication:****

Hazard communication is a set of practices and procedures designed to inform healthcare workers about the potential hazards of chemicals, cleaning agents, and other materials used in the workplace. Hazard communication programs include labeling of hazardous chemicals, safety data sheets, employee training, and proper storage and handling of chemicals. Hazard communication is essential for protecting healthcare workers from exposure to hazardous substances and ensuring a safe work environment.

****Emergency Preparedness:****

Emergency preparedness refers to the planning, training, and coordination of healthcare facilities to respond effectively to emergencies, disasters, or public health crises. Emergency preparedness plans should include protocols for communication, evacuation, patient care, and continuity of operations during emergencies. Regular drills, training exercises, and updates to emergency preparedness plans are essential for ensuring a prompt and coordinated response to emergencies.

****Waste Segregation:****

Waste segregation is the practice of separating different types of waste, such as infectious waste, non-infectious waste, sharps waste, and pharmaceutical waste, at the point of generation. Proper waste segregation is essential for preventing the spread of infections, reducing environmental impact, and ensuring safe disposal of healthcare waste. Healthcare facilities should have clear guidelines and procedures for waste segregation to comply with regulatory requirements and protect public health.

****Infectious Waste:****

Infectious waste, also known as biomedical waste or biohazardous waste, is waste that contains or is contaminated with infectious materials, such as blood, bodily fluids, or tissues. Infectious waste poses a risk of transmission of pathogens and must be handled, stored, and disposed of properly to prevent the spread of infections. Infectious waste should be segregated, packaged, and treated according to regulatory requirements and infection control guidelines.

****EPA Registered Disinfectants:****

EPA registered disinfectants are disinfectants that have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use in healthcare settings. EPA registered disinfectants undergo rigorous testing to demonstrate their effectiveness against specific pathogens and surfaces. Healthcare facilities should use EPA registered disinfectants and follow manufacturer instructions for proper dilution, contact time, and application to ensure effective disinfection and prevent the spread of infections.

****Chemical Exposure:****

Chemical exposure refers to contact with hazardous chemicals, cleaning agents, or disinfectants that can cause adverse health effects, such as skin irritation, respiratory problems, or poisoning. Healthcare workers may be exposed to chemicals through inhalation, skin contact, or ingestion during cleaning and disinfection tasks. Proper training, use of personal protective equipment, and adherence to safety protocols are essential to prevent chemical exposure and protect healthcare workers from occupational hazards.

****Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA):****

Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA) is a systematic process for evaluating and managing infection risks in healthcare settings to prevent the spread of infections. ICRA involves identifying potential sources of infection, assessing the likelihood of transmission, implementing control measures, and monitoring the effectiveness of infection control practices. Conducting regular ICRA is essential for identifying and addressing infection risks in healthcare facilities and protecting patients and