

10. Professional Certificate in Level 3 Medical Assistance in Health and Social Care

## Infection Prevention and Control in Care Settings

**Aerosol:** Aerosol refers to a fine spray or mist of liquid particles suspended in the air. In the context of infection prevention and control, aerosols can play a significant role in the transmission of infectious diseases, as they can be inhaled by individuals and potentially cause infection. Related terms include airborne transmission and respiratory viruses. Examples of aerosol-generating procedures include intubation, bronchoscopy, and suctioning.

**Airborne Precautions:** Airborne precautions are a set of infection control measures designed to prevent the transmission of airborne pathogens, such as tuberculosis, measles, and chickenpox. These precautions include the use of negative pressure isolation rooms, respirator masks, and closed suction systems. Related terms include droplet precautions and contact precautions.

**Antibiotic Resistance:** Antibiotic resistance refers to the ability of bacteria to resist the effects of antibiotics, making them less effective in treating infections. This can occur through the overuse or misuse of antibiotics, and it is a major concern in healthcare settings. Related terms include antimicrobial stewardship and antibiotic stewardship.

**Antimicrobial Stewardship:** Antimicrobial stewardship refers to the coordinated effort to promote the appropriate use of antimicrobial agents, such as antibiotics, to minimize the development of antimicrobial resistance. This can involve strategies such as antibiotic restriction, antibiotic rotation, and antimicrobial susceptibility testing. Related terms include antibiotic stewardship and infection control.

**Antiseptic:** An antiseptic is a chemical agent that is used to reduce the growth of microorganisms on living tissues, such as skin and mucous membranes. Examples of antiseptics include hydrogen peroxide, iodine, and chlorhexidine. Related terms include disinfectant and sterilant.

**Bloodborne Pathogen:** A bloodborne pathogen is a microorganism that is present in human blood and can cause disease in humans, such as HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C. Bloodborne pathogens can be transmitted through contact with infected blood or other bodily fluids. Related terms include bloodborne pathogen standard and occupational exposure.

**Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection:** A catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI) is a type of infection that occurs when a urinary catheter is inserted into the bladder and introduces bacteria into the urinary tract. CAUTIs are a common type of healthcare-associated infection. Related terms include catheter-associated bloodstream infection and ventilator-associated pneumonia.

**Cleaning:** Cleaning refers to the physical removal of dirt, dust, and other debris from surfaces, equipment, and instruments. Cleaning is an important step in the process of disinfection and sterilization. Related terms include disinfection and sterilization.

**Clostridioides difficile:** Clostridioides difficile (*C. difficile*) is a bacterium that can cause diarrhea and colitis,

particularly in individuals who have taken antibiotics. *C. difficile* is a common cause of healthcare-associated infections. Related terms include *C. difficile* infection and *C. difficile* colitis.

**Contact Precautions:** Contact precautions are a set of infection control measures designed to prevent the transmission of pathogens that are spread through direct or indirect contact with an infected individual, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and *Clostridioides difficile*. These precautions include the use of gloves, gowns, and dedicated equipment. Related terms include airborne precautions and droplet precautions.

**Decontamination:** Decontamination refers to the process of removing or inactivating microorganisms from surfaces, equipment, and instruments. Decontamination can involve cleaning, disinfection, or sterilization. Related terms include disinfection and sterilization.

**Disinfectant:** A disinfectant is a chemical agent that is used to inactivate or kill microorganisms on non-living surfaces, such as equipment and instruments. Examples of disinfectants include bleach, quaternary ammonium compounds, and phenolic compounds. Related terms include antiseptic and sterilant.

**Disinfection:** Disinfection refers to the process of inactivating or killing microorganisms on non-living surfaces, such as equipment and instruments. Disinfection can involve the use of disinfectants, heat, or other methods. Related terms include cleaning and sterilization.

**Droplet Precautions:** Droplet precautions are a set of infection control measures designed to prevent the transmission of pathogens that are spread through large droplets, such as influenza and pertussis. These precautions include the use of masks, gloves, and eye protection. Related terms include airborne precautions and contact precautions.

**Endoscope:** An endoscope is a medical device that is used to visualize the interior of the body, such as the gastrointestinal tract or respiratory tract. Endoscopes can be a source of infection if they are not properly cleaned and disinfected. Related terms include endoscopy and endoscope reprocessing.

**Epidemiology:** Epidemiology refers to the study of the distribution and determinants of health-related events, diseases, or health-related characteristics among populations. Epidemiology is an important tool in the field of infection prevention and control. Related terms include outbreak investigation and surveillance.

**Hand Hygiene:** Hand hygiene refers to the practice of cleaning and disinfecting the hands to prevent the transmission of microorganisms. Hand hygiene is a critical component of infection prevention and control. Related terms include hand washing and hand sanitizing.

**Healthcare-Associated Infection:** A healthcare-associated infection (HAI) is a type of infection that occurs in a healthcare setting, such as a hospital or clinic. HAIs can be caused by a variety of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Related terms include hospital-acquired infection and nosocomial infection.

**Infection Control:** Infection control refers to the practices and procedures that are used to prevent the transmission of microorganisms in healthcare settings. Infection control measures can include hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection, and the use of personal protective equipment. Related terms include

infection prevention and epidemiology.

**Infection Prevention:** Infection prevention refers to the measures that are taken to prevent the transmission of microorganisms in healthcare settings. Infection prevention measures can include vaccination, antibiotic stewardship, and the use of personal protective equipment. Related terms include infection control and epidemiology.

**Isolation:** Isolation refers to the separation of an individual who is infected with a communicable disease from others to prevent the transmission of the disease. Isolation can involve the use of isolation rooms, masks, and other personal protective equipment. Related terms include quarantine and segregation.

**Medical Device:** A medical device is an instrument or equipment that is used to diagnose, treat, or prevent a medical condition. Medical devices can be a source of infection if they are not properly cleaned and disinfected. Related terms include medical equipment and medical instrument.

**Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus:** Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) is a type of bacterium that is resistant to antibiotics, including methicillin. MRSA can cause a variety of infections, including skin and soft tissue infections, pneumonia, and bloodstream infections. Related terms include Staphylococcus aureus and antibiotic resistance.

**Microorganism:** A microorganism is a living organism that is too small to be seen with the naked eye, such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Microorganisms can cause a variety of diseases and infections. Related terms include microbe and germ.

**Nosocomial Infection:** A nosocomial infection is a type of infection that occurs in a healthcare setting, such as a hospital or clinic. Nosocomial infections can be caused by a variety of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Related terms include healthcare-associated infection and hospital-acquired infection.

**Occupational Exposure:** Occupational exposure refers to the risk of infection or disease that healthcare workers face as a result of their job duties. Occupational exposure can occur through contact with bodily fluids, airborne pathogens, or contaminated equipment. Related terms include bloodborne pathogen and sharps injury.

**Outbreak Investigation:** An outbreak investigation is a systematic process that is used to identify the cause and extent of an outbreak of a communicable disease. Outbreak investigations can involve epidemiological studies, laboratory testing, and environmental sampling. Related terms include epidemiology and surveillance.

**Personal Protective Equipment:** Personal protective equipment (PPE) refers to the gear that is worn by healthcare workers to protect themselves from infection, such as masks, gloves, and gowns. PPE is an important component of infection prevention and control. Related terms include hand hygiene and isolation.

**Quarantine:** Quarantine refers to the separation of an individual who has been exposed to a communicable disease from others to prevent the transmission of the disease. Quarantine can involve the use of masks,

gloves, and other personal protective equipment. Related terms include isolation and segregation.

**Respirator:** A respirator is a device that is used to protect the wearer from airborne pathogens, such as tuberculosis and influenza. Respirators can be worn by healthcare workers to prevent the transmission of disease. Related terms include mask and personal protective equipment.

**Sharps Injury:** A sharps injury is a type of injury that occurs when a healthcare worker is punctured by a needle or other sharp object that is contaminated with bodily fluids. Sharps injuries can pose a risk of infection, including bloodborne pathogens. Related terms include occupational exposure and bloodborne pathogen.

**Sterilization:** Sterilization refers to the process of eliminating all microorganisms from a surface, equipment, or instrument. Sterilization can involve the use of heat, steam, or chemicals. Related terms include disinfection and decontamination.

**Sterilant:** A sterilant is a chemical agent that is used to eliminate all microorganisms from a surface, equipment, or instrument. Examples of sterilants include ethylene oxide and hydrogen peroxide. Related terms include disinfectant and antiseptic.

**Surveillance:** Surveillance refers to the systematic collection and analysis of data to monitor the occurrence of infections and diseases in healthcare settings. Surveillance is an important tool in the field of infection prevention and control. Related terms include epidemiology and outbreak investigation.

**Transmission-Based Precautions:** Transmission-based precautions are a set of infection control measures that are designed to prevent the transmission of pathogens that are spread through specific routes, such as airborne, droplet, or contact transmission. Related terms include airborne precautions, droplet precautions, and contact precautions.

**Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococcus:** Vancomycin-resistant Enterococcus (VRE) is a type of bacterium that is resistant to the antibiotic vancomycin. VRE can cause a variety of infections, including urinary tract infections, bloodstream infections, and wound infections. Related terms include antibiotic resistance and antimicrobial stewardship.

**Ventilator-Associated Pneumonia:** Ventilator-associated pneumonia (VAP) is a type of infection that occurs in patients who are receiving mechanical ventilation. VAP can be caused by a variety of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Related terms include catheter-associated urinary tract infection and central line-associated bloodstream infection.

**Viral Load:** Viral load refers to the amount of a virus that is present in the blood or other bodily fluids. Viral load is an important measure of the severity of a viral infection, such as HIV or hepatitis C. Related terms include viral replication and antiviral therapy.

**Wound Infection:** A wound infection is a type of infection that occurs in a wound, such as a surgical site or a traumatic injury. Wound infections can be caused by a variety of microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Related terms include surgical site infection and wound care.