



## **DEFINITIONS**

In this manual “**shall**” is used to express a requirement, e.g. a provision the user is obliged to satisfy in order to comply; “**should**” is used to express a recommendation or that which is advised but not required; and “**may**” is used to express an option or that which is permissible within the limits of the recommendation.

### **Alcohol Based Hand Rub:**

An alcohol based antiseptic with a minimum of 60% alcohol that is applied to all surfaces of the hands to reduce the number of microorganisms present on the hands.

### **Antiseptic:**

A chemical that kills microorganisms on living skin or mucous membranes. Antiseptics should not be used in Housekeeping.

### **Antiseptic hand wash:**

Washing hands with water and soap or other detergents containing an antiseptic agent.

### **Biomedical waste:**

Any solid or liquid waste which may present a threat of infection to humans, including non liquid tissue, body parts, blood, blood products, and body fluids from humans and other primates; laboratory and veterinary wastes which contain human disease-causing agents; and discarded sharps.

### **Clean:**

The removal of visible contaminants and environmental debris, e.g microscopic particles of tissue, body fluids, dust, body waste, dirt.

### **Cleaning:**

The physical removal of foreign material, e.g. dust, soil, organic material such as blood, secretions, excretions and microorganisms. Cleaning physically removes rather than kills microorganisms. It is accomplished with water, detergents and mechanical action.

### **Clinic Setting:**

Healthcare provided in a clinic setting outside a healthcare facility, e.g. primary care clinic.



**Cohort:**

Two or more clients colonized or infected with the same organism who are placed together, e.g. in a separate room, from other clients who are not colonized or infected with that organism.

**Colonization:**

Presence of microorganisms in or on a host with growth and multiplication but without tissue invasion or cellular injury.

**Community Setting:**

Assessment, treatment, rehabilitation, provision of care provided in the community, e.g. community immunization clinic, healthy baby site, community education forums, community shelter.

**Contamination:**

The presence of microorganisms on inanimate objects (e.g. clothing, surgical instruments) or microorganisms transported transiently on body surfaces (e.g. hands), or in substances (e.g. water, food, milk).

**Critical items:**

Instruments and devices that enter sterile tissues, including the vascular system. Critical items present a high risk of infection if the item is contaminated with any microorganisms, including bacterial spores. Reprocessing critical items involves meticulous cleaning followed by sterilization.

**Decontamination:**

The removal of disease-producing microorganisms to leave an item safe for further handling.

**Dedicated:**

Equipment designated for the use of a single client.

**Direct contact:**

Direct physical contact between an infected or colonized individual and a susceptible host (body surface to body surface).

**Disinfection:**

The inactivation of disease producing organisms. Disinfection does not destroy bacterial spores. Disinfectants are used on inanimate objects. Disinfection usually involves chemicals, heat or ultraviolet light. Levels of chemical disinfection vary with the type of product used.



### **Fit checking (Seal Checking):**

A fit check is done each time a respirator is used. It determines an adequate seal exists. It is the only way to ascertain an adequate seal once fit tested. Any PPE required during tasks should also be worn during fit checking.

### **Fit testing:**

The use of a qualitative or a quantitative method to evaluate the fit of a specific make, model and size of respirator of an individual. Qualitative fit test is a pass/fail test method that relies on the subject's sensory response to detect a challenge agent in order to assess the adequacy of respirator fit. Quantitative fit test is a test method that uses an instrument to assess the amount of leakage into the respiratory tract in order to assess the adequacy of respirator fit.

### **Hand Hygiene:**

A general term that applies to hand washing, antiseptic hand wash, antiseptic hand rub, or surgical hand antisepsis.

### **Hand Washing:**

The process of washing hands with soap and water and friction.

### **Healthcare worker:**

An individual who provides direct care to patient to patients/clients/residents in the healthcare workplace, e.g. nurses, physicians, allied health workers.

### **High-level disinfection:**

Level of disinfection required when processing semicritical items. High-level disinfection processes destroy vegetative bacteria, mycobacteria, fungi, and enveloped (lipid) and non enveloped (non lipid) viruses, but not necessarily bacterial spores. High-level disinfectant chemicals (also called chemosterilants) must be capable of sterilization when contact time is extended. Items must be thoroughly cleaned prior to high-level disinfection.

### **Home Setting:**

Healthcare provided in the home, e.g. client's home, group home, hotel room.

### **Immune person:**

A person not susceptible to a specific infectious disease documented by history of the disease, immunization or laboratory confirmation of immunity.



### **Immunocompromised:**

Individuals whose immune mechanisms are deficient because of immunologic disorders (e.g. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, congenital immune deficiency syndrome, chronic diseases [e.g., diabetes mellitus, cancer, emphysema, or cardiac failure], or immunosuppressive therapy [e.g. radiation, cytotoxic chemotherapy, anti-graft rejection medication, steroids]).

### **Intermediate level disinfection:**

Level of disinfection required for some semicritical items. Intermediate level disinfectants kill vegetative bacteria, most viruses and most fungi but not resistant bacterial spores.

### **Infective dose:**

The number of organisms required to cause an infection. For Norovirus, a low infective dose (small number of organisms) results in infection. The infective dose is specific to the infectious agent.

### **Infection:**

The entry and multiplication of an infectious agent in the tissues of the host can be inapparent and apparent:

- Inapparent (asymptomatic, subclinical) infection: an infectious process running a course similar to that of clinical disease but below the threshold of clinical symptoms
- Apparent (symptomatic, clinical) infection: One resulting in clinical signs and symptoms (disease).

### **Infectious waste:**

The portion of biomedical waste capable of causing infections in humans, including: contaminated animal waste; human blood and blood products; pathological waste; and discarded sharps (needles, scalpels or broken medical instruments).

### **Invasive device:**

Any device that penetrates the skin (excluding peripheral IV's and venipunctures) or contacts or penetrates mucous membranes (excluding oral thermometers and single insertion of a urinary catheter with immediate removal)

### **Invasive procedure:**

Any procedure that penetrates the skin (excluding peripheral IV's and venipunctures) or involves a medical device that contacts or penetrates mucus membranes (excluding oral thermometers, and single insertion of a urinary catheter with immediate removal)



### **Low Level Disinfection:**

The level required when processing non-critical items or some environmental surfaces. Low-level disinfectants kill most vegetative bacteria, some fungi and enveloped (lipid) viruses (e.g. Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Hantavirus and HIV). Low-level disinfectants do not kill Mycobacterium or bacterial spores. Low-level disinfectants are used to clean environmental surfaces.

### **Medically essential purposes:**

Procedures that are necessary for the diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of the client. These are prescribed by the health care team.

### **Microorganism:**

A single-celled life form that is invisible to the naked eye and may cause disease in man or animals. Microorganisms include bacteria, protozoa, algae and fungi. Viruses are often included in this category though they are incapable of growth and reproduction outside of host cells.

### **N95 respirator:**

Personal protective equipment that is worn on the face, covers the nose and mouth, and is used to reduce the wearer's risk of inhaling hazardous airborne particles (including dust particles and infectious agents), gases or vapours.

### **Negative pressure isolation room:**

A room with air pressure differential between two adjacent airspaces such that air flow is directed into the room relative to the corridor ventilation, e.g. room air is prevented from flowing out of the room and into adjacent areas. These rooms are used for clients requiring Airborne and Airborne/Contact Precautions.

### **Non-critical items:**

Those items that either touch only intact skin but not mucous membranes or do not directly touch the client. Reprocessing of non-critical items involves cleaning and/or low level disinfection.

### **Non-immune persons:**

A person who is susceptible to a specific infectious disease.



### **Outbreak:**

The occurrence in a facility/unit of cases of an illness with a frequency clearly in excess of normal expectancy. The number of cases indicating presence of an outbreak will vary according to the infectious agent, size and type of population exposed, previous experience or lack of exposure to the disease, and time and place of occurrence. Therefore, the status of an outbreak is relative to the usual frequency of the disease in the same facility/unit, among the same population, at the same season of the year.

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

Gloves, gowns, masks, protective eyewear and face protection used according to risk of exposure to prevent transmission.

### **Reprocessing:**

The steps performed to prepare a used medical device for reuse. The steps include the collection and transportation of soiled devices, cleaning, inspection, disinfection, sterilization, packaging, clean transportation and storage of clean and disinfected/sterilized devices.

### **Resident Flora:**

Microorganisms that usually occupy a particular body site. Resident flora usually do not cause disease but often protect the body against disease-causing organisms. If disturbed, the resident flora promptly reestablishes itself.

### **Respiratory Hygiene/Cough Etiquette:**

Measures to contain respiratory secretions of an individual with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection.

### **Reusable Device:**

A device that has been designed by the manufacturer, through the selection of materials and/or components, to be reused.

### **Reusable Equipment:**

Equipment that touches intact skin but not mucous membranes or does not directly touch the client. Reprocessing of equipment involves cleaning and/or low level disinfection, e.g. blood pressure cuffs, stethoscope, tape measure.

### **Semicritical items:**

Devices that come in contact with nonintact skin or mucous membranes but ordinarily do not penetrate them. Reprocessing semicritical items involves meticulous cleaning followed preferably by high-level disinfection. Depending on the type of item and its intended use, intermediate level disinfection may be acceptable.



**Sterilization:**

The destruction of all forms of microbial life including bacteria, viruses, spores and fungi. Items must be cleaned thoroughly before effective sterilization can take place.

**Surgical/procedure mask:**

Personal protective equipment that is worn on the face, covers the nose and mouth, and is used to either reduce the wearer's risk of inhaling hazardous airborne microorganism and/splashing from respiratory droplets, or to contain a client's respiratory droplets.

**Transient Flora:**

Contaminants of the hands acquired from colonized or infected patients or contaminated environment or equipment. They are not consistently isolated from most clients. The most common transient flora include gram negative bacteria and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

**Visibly soiled hands:**

Hands showing visible dirt or visibly contaminated with proteinaceous material, blood, or other body fluids, e.g. fecal material or urine.