RECOGNIZING AND REDUCING RISKS TO HEALTHCARE WORKERS DURING THE SCREENING & TREATMENT OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS
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Learning Objectives
1. Be able to identify clinician risks when testing patients for STI.
2. Identify which infection control practices would be utilized to mitigate or eliminate those risks.
RECOGNIZING AND REDUCING RISKS

“Risk recognition is seeing the potential for a problem to happen.” – CDC Project Firstline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Reservoirs in Health Care <em>Places where germs live</em></th>
<th>Common Pathways in Health Care <em>Ways germs get from one place to another</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On or in the body</td>
<td>• Through touch</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Skin</td>
<td>• By being breathed in</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gut</td>
<td>• Through splashes and sprays</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Respiratory tract</td>
<td>◦ Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blood</td>
<td>◦ Body fluid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>• By bypassing/breaking down the body's natural defenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Wet Surfaces</td>
<td>◦ For example, through procedures or surgeries</td>
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<td>• Dry Surfaces</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Dirt and Dust</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Devices</td>
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</table>
RECOGNIZING RISKS FROM PATIENTS

• Organisms can live in the gut, respiratory tract, blood and, on the skin.
  • When testing for STI keep in mind there are also organisms that live in the mucous membranes.
• Transmission can happen when your skin or mucus membranes contact organisms.
• Transmission can be facilitated by contamination of your shoes & clothing.
UTILIZE STANDARD PRECAUTIONS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1. Hand hygiene.
2. Use of personal protective equipment
   • Masks, gloves, eye protection, gowns
3. Respiratory hygiene / cough etiquette
   • Utilize face masks for droplet precautions, respirators for airborne precautions
4. Sharps safety (engineering and work practice controls)
   • Safety devices, no recapping of needles
5. Safe injection practices
   • Aseptic technique for parenteral medications**
6. Sterile instruments and devices
   • Utilize Spalding Classification for cleaning equipment
7. Clean and disinfected environmental surfaces
   • 2 step cleaning, appropriate chemicals, UV treatment
RECOGNIZING RISKS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT

1. Water and wet surfaces
2. Dry surfaces
3. Devices
4. Dirt/dust
Tap water is NOT sterile water, there are always some germs in it.

Wet instruments and equipment can grow bacteria:
- Acinetobacter
- Serratia
- Pseudomonas
- Legionella

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Device Sterilization
- Hand Hygiene
- Use PPE
Germs from the air, the body and in stool can often be found on dry surfaces
  • Can live on surfaces for a long time
    • *Clostridioides difficile*
    • Norovirus
    • *Candida (C. auris)*
    • Rotavirus

High-touch surfaces
  • Bed Rails, light switches, door handles

Hands pick up germs from surfaces & transfer to other surfaces or people

Devices can be contaminated from contaminated hands

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Device sterilization
- Hand hygiene
- Use PPE
Germs from device (i.e., pulse oximeter) can be transferred to patients during care
- Critical and non-critical devices, shared devices
- IV starts, endoscopies, routine care

Germs that can live on devices
- *Staphylococcus aureus*
- *Streptococcus*
- *Candida*
- *Gut bacteria*

**WHERE IS THE RISK?**
Know where germs live to stop spread and protect patients

- When a device, like a pulse oximeter, is used on a patient’s body to provide care, any germs on that device can be spread to places in or on the patient’s body.
- When a device is put into a patient’s body, like an IV needle, endoscope, or artificial hip, any germs on the device can spread into the body.
- If not handled correctly, shared medical devices can spread germs from one patient to another.

**Germs That Can Live on Devices**
- *Staphylococcus aureus* (including MRSA)
- *Streptococcus* (Strep)
- *Candida* (including *C. auris*)
- Gut bacteria like *E. coli*, *Kluyvera*, and *C. difficile* (C. diff)

**Healthcare Tasks Involving Devices**
- Surgery and procedures like colonoscopies
- Starting IVs
- Taking vital signs

**Infection Control Actions to Reduce Risk**
- Cleaning and disinfection
- Device sterilization
- Hand hygiene
- Use of personal protective equipment (gloves)

- ✔ Cleaning & disinfection
- ✔ Device sterilization
- ✔ Hand hygiene
- ✔ Use PPE
Building construction can release dirt and dust into the environment.

Germs can live in dirt/soil:
- Aspergillus (fungus)
- Cryptococcus

Size of project doesn’t matter.

- Cleaning and disinfection
- Ventilation
- Barriers & containment
- Hand Hygiene
- Use PPE
• PPE only works if you use it!
• More is not necessarily better
• Exposure can happen even if you’re only in the room “for a minute”
• WASH YOUR HANDS!
• [Project Firstline](http://ProjectFirstline) provides infection control resources and training to keep patients & caregivers safe.
RESOURCES

https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/basics/standard-precautions.html

https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/projectfirstline/healthcare.html