

<b>SECTION 8A: CLINICAL PRACTICES</b>	<b>POLICY: 8A.12</b>
<b>POLICY: ASEPTIC TECHNIQUE</b>	<b>PAGE: 1 OF: 3</b>

### **PURPOSE:**

- To reduce and prevent the risk of infection by minimizing the presence of pathogenic microorganisms during clinical procedures to protect patients from healthcare-associated infection.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

- Aseptic: Free from contamination caused by harmful bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms
- Sterile: The absence of **ALL** microorganisms including bacteria, mold spores, and viruses
- Contamination: Introduction of microorganisms to an aseptic or sterile field

### **POLICY:**

Aseptic technique aims to prevent pathogenic microorganisms from being introduced to patients via hands, surfaces, and equipment. It is important to note that “sterile” means completely free from bacteria or other living organisms and although the term sterile technique and aseptic technique are often used interchangeably, they are not the same. It is nearly impossible to achieve “sterile” technique during all procedures due to the large numbers of microorganisms present on the human body and in the assorted healthcare environments. Controlled environments such as operating rooms can achieve near sterile techniques.

The six core elements of Aseptic technique are:

#### **1. Hand Hygiene**

Strict adherence to effective hand cleaning, using a systematic method, performed prior to, during, following contamination, and following invasive clinical procedures. The five critical moments for hand hygiene are:

- Before touching a patient
- Before performing any procedures on a patient
- After body fluid exposure or risk
- After touching a patient
- After touching the patient’s surroundings or equipment

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## 2. **Correct Usage of Gloves**

Appropriate use of gloves (clean vs. sterile) and other personal protective equipment to reduce the transmission of harmful microorganisms. Gloves are a single-use item. They help reduce the risk of contamination for the patient and body fluid exposure for the nurse. Sterile gloves should be worn if a key-part or key-site needs to be touched.

## 3. **Key-Part and Key-Site Protection**

Identifying and strictly not touching and protecting from touch contamination the most critical parts of the procedure equipment.

- Key-parts are any parts of the equipment which come into contact with the procedural equipment or the patient.
- Key-sites are any breaches in skin integrity which could be a portal of entry for microorganisms to colonize the patient including wounds and puncture sites

## 4. **Non-touch technique**

The skill of not touching any critical part(s) or site(s) of a clinical procedure.

## 5. **Key-Part Disinfection**

The disinfection of the most critical parts of the procedure equipment that could provide a port of entry for harmful microorganisms. While performing an aseptic procedure, key-parts that are contaminated must be made aseptic prior to using them again.

## 6. **Aseptic Field Management**

Establishing appropriate types of aseptic fields to protect the key-parts of procedure equipment prior to and during invasive clinical procedures. Aseptic fields should be managed as a key-part. They should be handled with a non-touch technique when possible, or with sterile gloves if touching is unavoidable.

## **PROCEDURE:**

Standard aseptic technique requires the nurse to:

- Perform hand hygiene and maintain appropriately including proper glove usage (clean vs. sterile) when required. Gloved hands should be kept at waist level or above.
- Identify key-parts and key-sites. Protect key-parts and key-sites from contamination during procedures.

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- If in doubt as to whether an item has become contaminated, assume it has. An item is contaminated if it was dropped on the floor, becomes wet or soiled, the wrapper or seal has been damaged or is discolored, or if the expiration date has expired.
- Decontaminate non-aseptic key-parts as required.
- Create and maintain aseptic fields. Aseptic fields should be prepared as close as possible to the scheduled time and should not be covered as a means to set the field up in advance.
- Use a non-touch technique while utilizing appropriate glove type (clean vs. sterile)
- Control environmental risks (i.e., nurse wearing a mask while changing a line dressing, have patient mask as well but if one is not available patient should turn their head away, etc.)

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Effective Hand Hygiene is the single most important measure to prevent transmission of infection in healthcare settings.
- The safest way to protect a key-part or key-site from contamination is to use a non-touch technique.
- Sterile gloves should be worn if a key-part or key-site needs to be touched.
- A general aseptic field promotes asepsis during procedure.