

Aseptic Technique

Factsheet



What is an aseptic technique?

Asepsis is recognised as the state of being free from pathogenic (harmful) microorganisms.

Key principles

- Reduce activity in the immediate vicinity of the area in which the procedure is to be performed
- Keep the exposure of a susceptible site to a minimum
- Check all sterile packs to be used for evidence of damage or moisture penetration
- Ensure all fluids and materials to be used are in date not re-using single use items
- Ensure contaminated/non-sterile items are not placed in the sterile field
- Ensure appropriate hand decontamination prior to the procedure
- Protect uniform/clothing with a disposable apron
- Use sterile gloves

Aseptic Non Touch Technique ANTT®

- ANTT® was originated by Stephen Rowley in the 1990's. By demand, it has become the de facto international standard for aseptic technique
- ANTT® is a specific type of aseptic technique with a unique theory and practice framework (NICE 2012)

ANTT ® six step approach

1	Risk assessment – assess achieving asepsis
2	Manage the environment– avoid or remove contamination risks
3	Decontaminate and Protect - hand hygiene, personal protective equipment, disinfecting equipment, surfaces or key parts
4	Use aseptic fields-general, critical and micro critical aseptic fields. Protect key-parts and key-sites
5	Use Non Touch Technique-key parts must only come into contact with other key-parts and key-sites
6	Prevent Cross Infection- safe equipment disposal, decontamination and hand hygiene

Aseptic technique is the practice of carrying out a procedure in such a way that you minimize the risk of introducing contamination into a vulnerable area or contaminating an invasive device.

Legislation

- Health & Safety at Work Act
- Care Standards Act
- Health & Social Care Act
- RIDDOR Reg.
- CoSHH Reg.
- Hazardous Waste Reg

Duty of care & due diligence

You need to be able to demonstrate that you have taken all reasonable and practical steps to protect others from harm, including infection.

What is the proof for your inspections?

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When to use aseptic technique

An aseptic technique is required whenever you are carrying out a procedure that involves contact with a part of the body or an invasive device where introducing micro-organisms may increase the risk of infection.

Examples of aseptic procedures

- Urinary catheterisation
- Wound dressings
- Venous cannulation

Clean technique

This method is a modified aseptic technique and aims to avoid introducing micro-organisms to a susceptible site and also to prevent cross-infection to patients and staff.

A clean technique adopts the same control of infection principles but clean (rather than sterile) single use gloves and/or tap water that is safe to drink may be used.

Sources of microbial contamination

Major contamination sources are water, air, dust, equipment, sewage, insects, rodents, and employees.

Risk of hygiene hazards

- Bacteria
- Viruses
- Fungi
- Parasites

Disease causing micro-organisms are known as pathogens.

Transmission

- Micro-organisms cannot move unaided
- The method by which pathogens move from one person or place is called transmission
- Transmission can be direct or indirect

Hand hygiene

This is crucial, transient bacteria can be removed by effective hand hygiene techniques. This means using the six step decontamination technique that ensures all surfaces of the hands are covered. (NHS 2008)

All staff that undertakes Aseptic Technique must have short or rolled back sleeves, no wrist jewellery/watches, no false nails and no stoned rings. Cuts and grazes must be covered with a plaster.

MRSA

A bacteria that's resistant to several widely used antibiotics. This means infections with MRSA can be harder to treat than other bacterial infections.

MRSA is common in hospitals and nursing homes, where people with open wounds, invasive devices such as catheters, and weakened immune systems are at greater risk. MRSA began as a hospital-acquired infection.

MRSA lives harmlessly on the skin of around 1 in 30 people – usually in the nose, armpits, groin or buttocks. This is known as “colonisation” or “carrying” MRSA.

SEPSIS

Sepsis (also known as blood poisoning) is the immune system's overreaction to an infection or injury.

Normally our immune system fights infection – but sometimes, for reasons we don't yet understand, it attacks our body's own organs and tissues. If not treated immediately, sepsis can result in organ failure and death. Yet with early diagnosis, it can be treated with antibiotics.

Clostridium difficile

- Clostridium difficile, also known as C. difficile or C. diff, is a bacterium that can infect the bowel and cause diarrhoea
- The infection most commonly affects people who have recently been treated with antibiotics, but can spread easily to others
- C.diff infections are unpleasant and can sometimes cause serious bowel problems, but they can usually be treated with another course of antibiotics