Transmission –Based Precautions

There are three categories of Transmission-Based Precautions: Contact Precautions, Droplet Precautions, and Airborne Precautions. Transmission-Based Precautions are used when the route(s) of transmission is (are) not completely interrupted using Standard Precautions alone. For some diseases that have multiple routes of transmission (e.g., SARS), more than one Transmission-Based Precautions category may be used. When used either singly or in combination, they are always used in addition to Standard Precautions.

<u>Contact Precautions</u> Contact Precautions are intended to prevent transmission of infectious agents, including epidemiologically important microorganisms, which are spread by contact with the patient or the patient's environment
A single-patient room is preferred for patients who require Contact Precautions. When a single-patient room is not available, consultation with infection control personnel is recommended to assess the various risks associated with other patient placement options (e.g., cohorting, keeping the patient with an existing roommate). In multi-patient rooms, >3 feet spatial separation between beds is advised to reduce the opportunities for inadvertent sharing of items between the infected/colonized patient and other patients. Healthcare personnel caring for patients on Contact Precautions wear a gown and gloves for all interactions that may involve contact with the patient or potentially contaminated areas in the patient's environment. Donning PPE upon room entry and discarding before exiting the patient room is done to contain pathogens such as Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), Vancomycin –resistant Entercocci (VRE) and Multi drug resistant Gram Negative Bacilli among others.

<u>Droplet Precautions</u> Droplet Precautions are intended to prevent transmission of pathogens spread through close respiratory or mucous membrane contact with respiratory secretions. Because these pathogens do not remain infectious over long distances in a healthcare facility, special air handling and ventilation are not required to prevent droplet transmission. Infectious agents for which Droplet Precautions are indicated include *B. pertussis*, influenza virus, adenovirus, rhinovirus, *N. meningitides*, and group A streptococcus among others. A single patient room is preferred for patients who require Droplet Precautions. When a single-patient room is not available, consultation with infection control personnel is recommended to assess the various risks associated with other patient placement options (e.g., cohorting, keeping the patient with an existing roommate). Spatial separation of > 3 feet and drawing the curtain between patient beds is especially important for patients in multi-bed rooms with infections transmitted by the droplet route. Healthcare personnel wear a mask (a respirator is not necessary) for close contact with infectious patient; the mask is donned upon room entry.

<u>Airborne Precautions</u> Airborne Precautions prevent transmission of infectious agents that remain infectious over long distances when suspended in the air (e.g., rubeola virus [measles], varicella virus [chickenpox], *M. tuberculosis,* and possibly SARS-CoV) among others. The preferred placement for patients who require Airborne Precautions is in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR). Healthcare personnel caring for patients on Airborne Precautions wear a N-95 mask prior to room entry.

Healthcare – Associated Infections (HAI)

Healthcare-associated infections (HAI) are infections caused by a wide variety of common and unusual bacteria, fungi, and viruses during the course of receiving medical care. Medical advances have brought lifesaving care to patients in need, yet many of those advances come with a risk of HAI. These infections related to medical care can be devastating and even deadly. Wherever patient care is provided, adherence to infection prevention guidelines is needed to ensure that all care is safe care. This includes traditional hospital settings as well as outpatient surgery centers, long-term care facilities, rehabilitation centers, and community clinics.

Modern healthcare employs many types of invasive devices and procedures to treat patients and to help them recover. Infections can be associated with the devices used in medical procedures, such as catheters or ventilators. These healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) include central line-associated bloodstream infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, and ventilator-associated pneumonia. Infections may also occur at surgery sites, known as surgical site infections. Additionally, *Clostridium difficile* can cause gastrointestinal infection; patients can be exposed to this bacterium through contaminated surfaces or the spores can be transferred on unclean hands of others. Central line-associated bloodstream infections, catheter-associated urinary tract infections, and ventilator-associated pneumonia account for roughly two-thirds of all HAIs.

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccine** each year.

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Most experts believe that flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season.