

UNIT 1

THE PRINCIPLES OF INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL

About this unit

In this unit learners are introduced to national and local policies in relation to infection control. Learners gain an understanding of employer and employee responsibilities in this area and how procedures and risk assessment can help minimise the risk of an outbreak of infection. Learners will also gain an understanding of how to use PPE correctly and the importance of good personal hygiene.

Learning outcome

The learner will:

Understand roles and responsibilities in the prevention and control of infections.

The learner can:

- Explain employees' roles and responsibilities in relation to the prevention and control of infection
- Explain employers' responsibilities in relation to the prevention and control of infection.

Employees' roles and responsibilities in relation to the prevention and control of infection

Infection is a major cause of human suffering. Even relatively minor infections can become more serious, leading to major infection and can, in some cases, lead to patient death. In addition to patient suffering, infection causes distress to family and friends.

The costs to the health care system of providing care for those with infections are huge. In addition to concerns over the growing costs to health care, the use of antibiotics to treat these infections is thought to be contributing towards the problems surrounding antibiotic resistance.

The NHS plan, published in 1999, stipulates that all NHS organisations should have effective systems in place to tackle Health care Associated Infection (HCAI) in order to minimise the risk to patients and staff.

For all these reasons prevention and control of infections are issues of very great practical importance for every health care worker. Your place of work will have appropriate guidelines/policies for control of infection and it is important that you locate and read these.

Infection control is an issue of health and safety, so is both an employer and employee responsibility.

Employees' roles and responsibilities

All employees are responsible for taking action to prevent the spread of infection, in accordance with legislation and local and organisational policies and procedures. They also have a personal and moral responsibility, as members of a caring society and profession.

There are many roles where infection control is important, these include:

- Employees who work in communal living environments
- Employees who work with hazardous substances
- Employees whose work activities may expose them to infection
- Employees working with individuals who may be vulnerable to infection

Employees have responsibilities to:

- Self
- Colleagues
- Employer
- Clients/Customers
- Visitors

Employers' responsibilities in relation to the prevention and control of infection

Employers' responsibilities arise from:

- Legal responsibilities
- Organisational responsibilities
- Personal/moral responsibilities.

Employers' are responsible for:

- Assessing risks
- Putting procedures in place
- Ensuring procedures are followed
- Ensuring employees are appropriately trained in relation to infection control
- Making sure employees are aware of the health and safety aspects of their work
 - Posting information on notice boards
 - Keeping an information file such as Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)
 - Providing supervision
- Keeping records
- Ensuring that the relevant standards, policies and guidelines are available within the workplace.

Activity 1 relates to the above

Learning outcome

The learner will:

Understand legislation and policies relating to prevention and control of infections.

The learner can:

- Outline current legislation and regulatory body standards which are relevant to the prevention and control of infection
- Describe local and organisational policies relevant to the prevention and control of infection.

Understand legislation and policies relating to prevention and control of infections

Legislation and regulations affecting infection prevention and control

The prevention and control of infection should be a high priority within the health care setting for many reasons. Not least is the legal responsibility to have a duty of care for the patients/clients.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Both employers and employees are responsible for their own actions in the workplace. All reasonable steps should be taken when carrying out your work duties and all staff should have adequate health and safety training, and measures should be taken to ensure that policies and procedures are in place and adhered to. For example, it is the employers' responsibility to provide adequate protective equipment and the employee's responsibility to use it appropriately.

The Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984

- Provides information on the legal requirements for the reporting of contagious or infectious diseases, for example, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis, HIV and Legionella.

Food Safety Act 1990

The requirements of this act apply to any area where food is prepared, stored or eaten. Control is required to ensure that the risks of any infection, as a result of bad handling of food, are minimised.

Local and central government employ staff to inspect premises without any advance notice. (Environmental Health Officers).

Food hygiene

In many health care environments there may be infection control responsibilities under the Food Safety Act 1990 and the Food Safety Act (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995.

Under this legislation, care workers who handle food must:

- Keep themselves and their workplace clean
- Wear suitable clean, washable or disposable, protective clothing
- Protect food from any possible contamination
- Abide by regulations setting out safe temperature controls for storage, preparation and display of food
- Inform their employer of any illness which may affect their safe handling of food



N.B. These regulations also require that employees who handle food as part of their normal duties should also undertake specific food hygiene training.

Reporting Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995

The employer or manager in control of work premises has a responsibility under RIDDOR to report any work related accidents or disease which result in serious injury or an employee being "off sick" due to injury for more than three working days.

The Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1998

Describe the reporting systems and the types of disease which must be reported.

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Requires all staff to be provided with adequate and appropriate training and a set of working instructions demonstrating 'safe working practices' for work related activities.

Controls Assurance Standards – HSC 2000/02

This standard provides a framework to control and manage infection. It provides a time table for senior managers and infection control teams to work to.

The documents key action areas are:

- Strengthen prevention and control of infection
- Secure appropriate health care services for patients with infection
- Improve surveillance of infection
- Monitor and optimise antimicrobial prescribing.

Medicines and Health care Regulatory Agency (MHRA)

This regulatory body ensures the medicines and products available in the health care sector are safe to use. The MHRA issue SAFETY BULLETINS if they receive reports of faulty products or products which may be harmful to health. It is the responsibility of the health care facility to report untoward incidents or products that are faulty to the MRHA.

Standards for Better Health 2006

The standards were published by the Department of Health (DoH) and will achieve two important things. First they will set the foundations for a common high quality of health care throughout England. Second, they will clarify what the NHS can and should be reaching for in its ambitions, both for the public and for the people who work within it.

Unit One: The Principles of Infection Prevention and Control

Activity 1

Locate your organisation's infection control (or a local policy) and briefly describe the employees' and employers' roles and responsibility.

- (i) Employees' roles and responsibilities

- (ii) Employers' roles and responsibilities

Activity 2

Find out who your infection control person/team is/are. Enter their name(s) and means of contact in your workbook. Also detail their role and responsibilities for controlling infection. Your manager should have this information.

Activity 3

Describe the procedures there are/should be in place in your/a care setting in the event of an infection outbreak.

Activity 4

Before completing the following, speak with your tutor and confirm a Witness Testimony is required. THE FOLLOWING WITNESS TESTIMONY IS NOT REQUIRED FOR HOME LEARNING STUDENTS.

Ask your line manager to complete the following witness testimony form

Witness testimony

| | |
|---|--|
| Candidate name: | |
| Centre: | |
| Location: | |
| Assessor name: | |
| Please give a brief description below of what the candidate has done to meet the assessment criteria stated. | |
| Assessment of group discussion with regard to the impact of an infection outbreak in your place of work. | |
| I confirm the candidate has demonstrated competence in the above. | |
| Signed: | |
| Witness name: | |
| Position: | |
| Company details: | |
| Date: | |

