

Aseptic Technique

● SKILL SNAPSHOT

Purpose

Prevent contamination of key parts/sites and reduce healthcare-associated infection during invasive procedures.

When to use

Wound care, injections, vascular access, urinary catheterization, sterile procedures, and device manipulation.

Supplies needed

Procedure-specific sterile/clean supplies; PPE; antiseptic; sterile field/drape; waste container.

● PREP + PATIENT SETUP

- Verify procedure and required clean vs sterile technique.
- Assess allergies to antiseptic, latex, or adhesives.
- Explain procedure; provide privacy and position patient.
- Clean work surface; gather all supplies; perform hand hygiene.

● VAULT TIP

When in doubt, throw it out. A questionable sterile item is contaminated.

● STEP-BY-STEP

- Open package away from body; first flap away, side flaps, then near flap.
- Touch only the 1-inch outer border of a sterile field; it is contaminated.
- Keep sterile items above waist and in constant view.
- Add items without reaching across field; do not touch key parts/sites.
- Don sterile gloves without touching outer glove surfaces.
- Clean from least contaminated to most contaminated; use a new swab for each pass.
- Allow antiseptic to dry completely; do not fan, blot, or repalpate prepared site.
- If sterility is uncertain, consider it contaminated and replace it.
- Dispose supplies; remove PPE; perform hand hygiene.

● SAFETY REMINDERS

- Moisture causes strike-through contamination.
- Anything below waist, out of sight, or touched by nonsterile item is contaminated.
- The field must remain continuously observed.
- Use Standard Precautions and sharps safety.

● COMMON MISTAKES

- Reaching over or turning away from field.
- Touching key parts or prepared site.
- Using wet, torn, expired, or previously opened supplies.
- Pouring solution with label facing down or splashing field.

● DOCUMENTATION

- Procedure and site; clean or sterile technique used.
- Antiseptic/dressing/device and patient tolerance.
- Assessment findings and specimen details.
- Contamination event, corrective action, and education.