

Types of Precautions

● SKILL SNAPSHOT

Purpose

Prevent transmission by matching PPE and room controls to the organism and route.

When to use

Use Standard Precautions for every patient; add Contact, Droplet, or Airborne Precautions when indicated.

Supplies needed

Hand hygiene supplies; gloves; gown; mask/respirator; eye protection; dedicated equipment; isolation signage.

● PREP + PATIENT SETUP

- Verify the ordered precaution and suspected/confirmed infection.
- Explain isolation and PPE to the patient/visitors.
- Post signage; gather supplies outside the room.
- Use dedicated or disinfected equipment.

● VAULT TIP

Think route first: touch = Contact, large respiratory droplets = Droplet, suspended particles = Airborne.

● STEP-BY-STEP

- Perform hand hygiene before entering.
- STANDARD: gloves for blood/body-fluid exposure; gown, mask, and eye protection based on splash risk; safe injections and sharps handling.
- CONTACT: gown + gloves on entry. Examples: C. difficile, uncontrolled drainage, many MDROs. Use soap and water for C. difficile after care; sporicidal environmental cleaning.
- DROPLET: surgical mask on entry; add eye protection per policy. Examples: influenza, pertussis, meningococcal disease. Patient wears mask for transport.
- AIRBORNE: fit-tested N95 or higher respirator; negative-pressure room; door closed. Examples: TB, measles, varicella. Patient wears surgical mask for transport.
- Sequence PPE based on anticipated exposure; remove without contaminating clothing or skin.
- Remove PPE at designated location; hand hygiene immediately.
- Limit transport; notify receiving departments of precautions.

● SAFETY REMINDERS

- Never delay urgent care while arranging isolation.
- Use transmission-specific PPE in addition to Standard Precautions.
- Confirm facility policy for organism-specific requirements.
- Report unprotected exposure promptly.

● COMMON MISTAKES

- Using gloves instead of hand hygiene.
- Wearing PPE in hallways or reusing single-use PPE.
- Entering an airborne room without a fit-tested respirator.
- Using alcohol rub alone after C. difficile care.

● DOCUMENTATION

- Precaution type and indication.
- Patient/visitor education and understanding.
- PPE/isolation measures implemented.
- Exposure, breach, symptoms, and notifications.