

Glossary of Terms

Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI): Any new onset acute respiratory infection that could potentially be spread by the droplet route (either upper or lower respiratory tract), which presents with symptoms of a fever greater than 38°C and a new or worsening cough or shortness of breath (previously known as *febrile respiratory illness*, or FRI). It should be noted that elderly people and people who are immunocompromised may not have a febrile response to a respiratory infection.

Additional Precautions (AP): Precautions (i.e. contact precautions, droplet precautions, airborne precautions) that are necessary in addition to Routine Practices for certain pathogens or clinical presentations. These precautions are based on the method of transmission (e.g. contact, droplet, airborne).

Administrative Controls: Measures put in place to reduce the risk of infection to staff or to clients (e.g. infection prevention and control policies/procedures, education/training).

Aerosol: Small droplet of moisture that may carry microorganisms. Aerosols may be light enough to remain suspended in the air for short periods of time, allowing inhalation of the microorganism.

Airborne Infection Isolation Room (AIIR): A room that is designed, constructed and ventilated to limit the spread of airborne microorganisms from an infected occupant to the surrounding areas of the health care setting. This is also known as a negative pressure room. NOTE: The Canadian Standards Association uses the term Airborne Isolation Room, abbreviated ARI.

Airborne Precautions: Used in addition to Routine Practices for patients known or suspected of having an illness transmitted by the airborne route (i.e. by small droplet nuclei that remain suspended in the air and may be inhaled by others).

Alcohol-based Hand Rub (ABHR): A liquid, gel or foam formulation of alcohol (e.g. ethanol, isopropanol) which is used to reduce the number of microorganisms on hands in clinical situations when the hands are not visibly soiled. ABHRs contain emollients to reduce skin irritation and are less time-consuming to use than washing with soap and water.

Antibiotic-Resistant Organism (ARO): A microorganism that has developed resistance to the action of several antimicrobial agents and that is of special clinical or epidemiological significance.

Antiseptic: An agent that can kill microorganisms and is applied to living tissue and skin.

Audit: A systematic and independent examination to determine whether quality activities and related results comply with planned arrangements, are implemented effectively and are suitable to achieve objectives.

Barriers: Equipment or objects used to prevent exposure of skin, mucous membranes or clothing of staff to splashes or sprays of potentially infectious materials.

Biomedical Waste: Contaminated, infectious waste from a clinical office setting that requires treatment prior to disposal in landfill sites or sanitary sewer systems. Biomedical waste includes human anatomical waste; human and animal cultures or specimens (excluding urine and faeces); human liquid blood and blood products; items contaminated with blood or blood products that would release liquid or semi-liquid

blood if compressed; body fluids visibly contaminated with blood; body fluids removed in the course of surgery, treatment or for diagnosis (excluding urine and faeces); sharps; and broken glass which has come into contact with blood or body fluid.

Body Fluid: Any body fluid containing visible blood and all body fluids with the capability of transmitting hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and /or HIV, i.e. seminal fluid, vaginal secretions, cerebral spinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, peritoneal fluid, pericardial fluid, amniotic fluid and tissues.

Chain of Transmission: A model used to understand the infection process.

Cleaning: Involves the physical removal of foreign material (e.g. dust, soil) and organic material (e.g. blood, secretions, excretions, microorganisms). Cleaning physically removes rather than kills microorganisms. It is accomplished with water, detergents and mechanical action.

Client/Patient: Anyone receiving health care within a health care setting.

Clostridium difficile (CDI): A gram positive, spore-forming, anaerobic bacillus. It is widely distributed in the environment and colonizes up to 3-5% of adults without causing symptoms. Certain strains can produce two toxins: toxin A and toxin B, which are responsible for diarrhea.

Cluster: A grouping of cases of a disease within a specific time frame and geographic location, suggesting a possible association between the cases with respect to transmission.

Colonization: The presence and growth of microorganisms in or on a body with growth and multiplication but without tissue invasion or cellular injury. The individual will be asymptomatic and not considered infected.

Contact Precautions: Used in addition to Routine Practices to reduce the risk of transmitting infectious agents via contact with an infectious person.

Contamination: The presence of an infectious agent on hands or on a surface such as clothes, gowns, gloves, bedding, toys, surgical instruments, client care equipment, dressings or other inanimate objects.

Critical Medical Equipment/Devices: Medical equipment/devices that enter sterile tissues, including the vascular system (e.g. biopsy forceps, foot care equipment, dental hand pieces, etc.).

Cytotoxic Waste: Waste cytotoxic drugs, including leftover or unused cytotoxic drugs and tubing, tissues, needles, gloves and any other items which have come into contact with a cytotoxic drug.

Dangerous Goods: A product, substance, or organism that could present a hazard to persons or the environment in the event of a spill or leak.

Decontamination: The process of cleaning, followed by the inactivation of microorganisms, in order to render an object safe for handling.

Detergent: A synthetic cleansing agent that can emulsify oil and suspend soil. A detergent contains surfactants that do not precipitate in hard water and may also contain protease enzymes and whitening agents.

Diagnostic Specimen: Any human or animal material, including but not limited to excreta, secreta, blood and its components, tissue and tissue fluid swabs, that is handled, offered for transport or transported for the purpose of diagnosis. Specimens suspected of containing or known to contain an infectious substance can NOT be transported as a diagnostic specimen.

Direct Care: Providing hands-on care (e.g. bathing, washing, turning client, changing clothes, continence care, dressing changes, care of open wounds/ lesions, toileting).

Disinfectant: A product that is used on surfaces or medical equipment/devices which results in disinfection of the surface or equipment/device. Disinfectants are applied only to inanimate objects. Some products combine a cleaner with a disinfectant.

Disinfection: The inactivation of disease-producing microorganisms. Disinfection does not destroy bacterial spores. Medical equipment/devices must be cleaned thoroughly before effective disinfection can take place.

Droplet Precautions: Used in addition to Routine Practices for patients known or suspected of having an infection that can be transmitted by large infectious droplets.

Drug Identification Number (DIN): In Canada, disinfectants are regulated as drugs under the *Food and Drugs Act* and Regulations. Disinfectant manufacturers must obtain a drug identification number (DIN) from Health Canada prior to marketing, which ensures that labelling and supporting data have been provided and that it has undergone and passed a review of its formulation, labelling and instructions for use.

Endemic: A disease or condition that normally occurs within a population or geographic area.

Engineering Controls: Physical or mechanical measures put in place to reduce the risk of infection to staff or patients (e.g. heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, room design, placement of hand washing sinks).

Environment of the Client: The immediate space around a client that may be touched by the patient and may also be touched by the health care provider when providing care. The client environment includes equipment, medical devices, furniture (e.g. bed, chair), telephone, and the bathroom that the client uses.

Environmental Health Officer: EHOs provide advice, guidance, education, public health inspections and recommendations to First Nations and their leadership to help them manage public health risks associated with the environment.

Epidemic: The occurrence of more cases of a disease than expected in a given population and place during a specified time period.

Exposed Health Care Worker (HCW): Any person carrying on activities in the health facility who has had an exposure to blood-borne pathogens; this exposure may be through percutaneous injury from a contaminated needle or other sharp object, a splash onto a mucous membrane or non-intact skin, or a human bite that breaks the skin. Such an injury together with blood or a body fluid capable of transmitting hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV), and/or HIV must be present for a HCW to be exposed. Other infectious exposures are dependent on the proximity of exposure, and may include consideration of whether personal protective equipment (PPE) was worn, immunity and/or immunization status.

Eye Protection: A device that covers the eyes and is used by health care workers to protect the eyes when it is anticipated that a procedure or care activity is likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions, or within two metres of a coughing patient. Eye protection includes safety glasses, safety goggles, face shields and visors.

Facial Protection: Personal protective equipment that protect the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and mouth from splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions. Facial protection may include a mask or respirator in conjunction with eye protection, or a face shield that covers eyes, nose and mouth.

Fit-Test: A qualitative or quantitative method to evaluate the fit of a specific make, model and size of respirator on an individual. Fit-testing shall be done periodically, at least every two years and whenever there is a change in respirator face piece or the user's physical condition which could affect the respirator fit.

Fomites: Objects in the inanimate environment that may become contaminated with microorganisms and serve as vehicles of transmission.

Hand Care: Actions and products that reduce the risk of skin irritation.

Hand Care Program: A hand care program for staff is a key component of hand hygiene and includes hand care assessment, staff education, occupational health assessment if skin integrity is an issue, provision of hand moisturizing products and provision of alcohol-based hand rub that contains an emollient.

Hand Hygiene: A general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using soap and running water or an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR). Hand hygiene includes surgical hand antisepsis.

Hand Hygiene Moment: The point(s) in an activity at which hand hygiene is performed. There may be several hand hygiene moments in a single care sequence or activity.

Hand Hygiene Indication: The reason why hand hygiene is necessary at a given moment.

Hand Washing: The physical removal of microorganisms from the hands using soap (plain or antimicrobial) and running water.

Health Care-Associated Infection (HAI): A term relating to an infection that is acquired during the delivery of health care (also known as *nosocomial infection*).

Health Care Environment: People and items which make up the care environment (e.g. objects, medical equipment, staff, clients) of a hospital, clinic or ambulatory setting, outside the immediate environment of the client.

Health Care Facility: A set of physical infrastructure elements supporting the delivery of health related services. A health care facility does not include a client's home.

Health Care Provider (HCP): Any person delivering health care services. A HCP can also be referred to as a Health Care Worker (HCW). They can include but are not limited to nurses, dental hygienists, physicians, dentists, pharmacists and other related and regulated health professions including Environmental Health Officers (EHO) employed by Health Canada FNIHB.

Health Care Setting: Any location where health care is provided, including settings where emergency care is provided, community health centres and clinics, dental offices, and home health care.

High-Level Disinfection (HLD): The level of disinfection required when processing semi-critical medical equipment/devices. High-level disinfection processes destroy vegetative bacteria, mycobacteria, fungi and enveloped (lipid) and non-enveloped (non-lipid) viruses, but not necessarily bacterial spores. Medical equipment/devices must be thoroughly cleaned prior to high-level disinfection.

High-Touch Surfaces: High-touch surfaces are those that have frequent contact with hands. Examples include doorknobs, light switches, and wall areas around the toilet and edges of privacy curtains.

Hospital Clean: The measure of cleanliness routinely maintained in client care areas of the health facility. Hospital Clean is “Hotel Clean” with the addition of disinfection, increased frequency of cleaning, auditing, and other infection control measures in client care areas.

Hotel Clean: A measure of cleanliness based on visual appearance that includes dust and dirt removal, waste disposal and cleaning of windows and surfaces. Hotel clean is the basic level of cleaning that takes place in all areas of a health facility.

Hospital-Grade Disinfectant: A low-level disinfectant that has a drug identification number (DIN) from Health Canada indicating its approval for use in Canadian hospitals.

Hydrogen Peroxide Enhanced Action Formulation (HP-EAF): A formulation of hydrogen that contains surfactants, wetting agents and chelating agents. The resulting synergy makes it a powerful oxidizer that can rapidly achieve broad-spectrum disinfection for environmental surfaces and non-critical devices. A second concentration (2–7%) has a sporicidal claim.

Immunization: Immunization, also called vaccination, refers to the injection or other agents (e.g. nasal spray, oral drops) that are given to boost a person’s immune system for protection against certain infections. Immunization helps the body recognize and fight a particular infection before the person gets sick.

Infection: The entry and multiplication of an infectious agent in the tissues of the host. Asymptomatic or sub-clinical infection is an infectious process running a course similar to that of clinical disease but below the threshold of clinical symptoms. Symptomatic or clinical infection is one resulting in clinical signs and symptoms (disease).

Infectious Agent: A microorganism i.e. a bacterium, fungus, parasite, virus or prion, which is capable of invading body tissues, multiplying and causing infection.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC): Evidence-based practices and procedures that, when applied consistently in health facility settings can prevent or reduce the risk of infection in clients, health care providers and visitors

Low-Level Disinfectant: A chemical agent that achieves low-level disinfection when applied to surfaces or items in the environment.

Low-Level Disinfection (LLD): Level of disinfection required when processing non-invasive medical equipment (i.e. non-critical equipment) and some environmental surfaces. Equipment and surfaces must be thoroughly cleaned prior to low-level disinfection.

Low-Touch Surfaces: Surfaces that have minimal contact with hands. Examples include walls, ceilings, mirrors, and window sills.

Manufacturer: Any person, partnership or incorporated association that manufactures and sells medical equipment/devices under its own name or under a trade mark, design, trade name or other name or mark owned or controlled by it.

Mask: A device that covers the nose and mouth and is secured in the back. It is used by health care providers to protect the mucous membranes of the nose and mouth.

Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS): A document that contains information on the potential hazards (health, fire, reactivity and environmental) and how to work safely with a chemical product. It also contains information on the use, storage, handling and emergency procedures all related to the hazards of the material. MSDSs are prepared by the supplier or manufacturer of the material.

Medical Equipment/Device: Any instrument, apparatus, appliance, material, or other article, whether used alone or in combination, intended by the manufacturer to be used for human beings for the purpose of diagnosis, prevention, monitoring, treatment or alleviation of disease, injury or handicap; investigation, replacement, or modification of the anatomy or of a physiological process; or control of conception.

Mode of Transmission: The method by which infectious agents spread from one person to another (e.g. contact, droplet or airborne route).

Moistened Towelette: Single-use, disposable towelette that is pre-moistened, usually with a skin antiseptic (e.g. alcohol), that is used to physically remove visible soil from hands in situations where running water is not available.

Monitoring: A planned series of observations or measurements of a named parameter (e.g. monitoring cleaning of a client room).

Methicillin-Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA): MRSA is a strain of *Staphylococcus aureus* that has a minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC) to oxacillin of ≥ 4 mcg/ml and contains the *mecA* gene coding for penicillin-binding protein 2a (PBP 2a). MRSA is resistant to all of the beta-lactam classes of antibiotics, such as penicillins, penicillinase-resistant penicillins (e.g. cloxacillin) and cephalosporins. MRSA has been associated with health-care-associated infections and outbreaks.

National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Provides the Public Health Agency of Canada with ongoing and timely medical, scientific, and public health advice relating to immunization.

N95 Respirator: A personal protective device that is worn on the face and covers the nose and mouth to reduce the wearer's risk of inhaling airborne particles. A NIOSH-certified N95 respirator filters particles one micron in size, has 95 per cent filter efficiency and provides a tight facial seal with less than 10 per cent leak.

Noncritical Medical Equipment/ Device: Equipment/device that either touches only intact skin (but not mucous membranes) or does not directly touch the client. Reprocessing of noncritical equipment/devices involves cleaning and may also require low-level disinfection (e.g. blood pressure cuffs, stethoscopes).

Pandemic: The Public Health Agency of Canada defines a pandemic as “an epidemic disease of widespread prevalence around the globe.”

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Clothing or equipment worn by staff for protection against hazards.

Point-of-Care: The place where three elements occur together: the client, the health care provider and care or treatment involving client contact.

Point-of-Care Risk Assessment (PCRA): A PCRA is the health care provider’s (HCPs) evaluation of the likelihood of exposure to an infectious agent for a specific interaction, with a specific client in a specific environment under available conditions to be able to choose the appropriate actions/PPE needed to minimize the risk of exposure for the specific client, other clients in the environment, HCPs, visitors, etc.

Portal of Entry: The anatomic site at which microorganisms get into the body, i.e. mucous membranes of nose, mouth and broken skin.

Portal of Exit: The anatomic site at which microorganisms leave the body, i.e. secretions and excretions that exit the respiratory tract, gastrointestinal tract or broken skin.

Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC): A multidisciplinary scientific advisory body that provides to the Chief Medical Officer of Health evidence-based advice regarding multiple aspects of infectious disease identification, prevention and control. More information is available at: <http://www.publichealthontario.ca>.

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC): A national agency which promotes improvement in the health status of Canadians through public health action and the development of national guidelines. The PHAC website is located at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca>

Public Health Ontario (PHO): Public Health Ontario is the new operating name for the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP).

Regional Infection Control Networks (RICN): The RICN of Ontario coordinate and integrate resources related to the prevention, surveillance and control of infectious diseases across all health care sectors and for all health care providers, promoting a common approach to infection prevention and control and utilization of best-practices within the region.

Reprocessing: The steps performed to prepare reusable medical equipment for use (e.g. cleaning, disinfection, sterilization).

Reservoir: Any person, animal, substance or environmental surface in which an infectious agent survives or multiplies, posing a risk for infection.

Respirator: See *N95 respirator*

Respiratory Etiquette: Personal practices that help prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses that cause acute respiratory infections (e.g. covering the mouth when coughing, care when disposing of tissues).

Risk Assessment: An evaluation of the interaction of the health care provider, the client and the client environment to assess and analyze the potential for exposure to infectious diseases.

Routine Practices (RP): The system of IPAC practices to be used with all clients during all care to prevent and control transmission of microorganisms in all health facilities. For a full description of Routine Practices, refer to PIDAC's *Routine Practices and Additional Precautions for all Health Care Settings*.

Safety-Engineered Medical Device: A non-needle sharp or a needle device used for withdrawing body fluids, accessing a vein or artery, or administering medications or other fluids, with a built-in safety feature or mechanism that effectively reduces exposure incident risk. Safety-engineered devices shall be licensed by Health Canada.

Seal-Check: A procedure that the health care provider must perform each time an N95 respirator is worn to ensure it fits the wearer's face correctly to provide adequate respiratory protection. The health care provider shall receive training on how to perform a seal-check correctly.

Sharps: Objects capable of causing punctures or cuts (e.g. needles, lancets, sutures, blades, clinical glass).

Staff: Persons employed by Health Canada FNIHB who are conducting health care related activities in settings where health care is provided to First Nation communities. See also *Health Care Providers*.

Sterilization: The level of reprocessing required when processing critical medical equipment/devices. Sterilization results in the destruction of all forms of microbial life including bacteria, viruses, spores and fungi. Equipment/devices must be cleaned thoroughly before effective sterilization can take place.

Surgical Hand Antisepsis: The preparation of hands for surgery, using either antimicrobial soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub, preferably with sustained antimicrobial activity.

Susceptible Host: An individual who is at risk for infection.

TDG Regulations (TDGR): Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations published by Transport Canada provides Road Regulations for transporting dangerous goods in Canada. The Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act (1992) is federal legislation designed to regulate the movement of dangerous goods via roads, rail, air, and ship within Canada.

Tuberculin Skin Test (TST): A skin test that is used to identify whether a person has delayed-type hypersensitivity reaction to tuberculin antigens.

Vaccine: Vaccines are highly regulated, complex biologic products designed to induce a protective immune response both effectively and safely.

Vancomycin-Resistant Enterococci (VRE): Strains of *Enterococcus faecium* or *Enterococcus faecalis* that have a minimal inhibitory concentration (MIC) to vancomycin of ≥ 32 mcg/ml. and/ or contain the resistance genes *vanA* or *vanB*.

Visibly Soiled Hands: Hands on which dirt or body fluids can be seen.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS): Canada's national hazard communication standard. The key elements of the system are cautionary labelling of containers of WHMIS 'controlled products', the provision of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) and staff education and training programs.