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Sterile Technique and Application, 48.20.01

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SUPERSEDES: 1/29/07, 04/02, /96, 2/83, 3/87

PURPOSE:

Established guidelines to acquaint all Operating Room personnel to the principles of sterile technique.

POLICY:

- All articles used in an Operating Room during a specific sterile surgical procedure will have been previously sterilized. Sterile linen, gauze, basins, and such materials are stocked in the sterile supply room. Instruments may also be prepared or sterilized immediately preceding the operative procedure and taken directly to the sterile table from the autoclave.
- Persons who are "not sterile" touch only unsterile articles.
- Persons who are "sterile" touch only articles so designated sterile.

GUIDELINES:

- Non-sterile persons should observe the following:
 - a. Maintain sufficient distance from sterile areas.
 - b. Allow a wide margin of safety in passing sterile areas to avoid contamination.
 - c. Face a sterile area when passing to secure and prevent the danger of brushing against the area.
- The Circulating nurse stands at a distance from the sterile field to adjust the light.
- Non-sterile persons must guard against contaminating an area designed as "sterile".
- Drapes should not be flipped, fanned or shaken near a sterile field.
- Non-sterile persons must not reach over a sterile field.
- The Circulating nurse peels the cover of a solution container or test tube so that the edge of the cover never covers the lip of the flask.
- The Circulating nurse is careful that the edge of the flask cover does not touch the lip of the flask when lifting it off.
- The Scrub person touches only the portion above the table level.
- The Scrub person drapes an unsterile field towards themselves first.
- The Scrub person drapes a table with sheets in a manner that unfolds so that they are dropped and not brought up to the field level.

- Gowns are considered sterile in front from chest level to level of the sterile field.
- Sterile persons keep hands in sight and at or above level of the sterile field. Arms are never folded.
- Hands are kept away from face and elbows close to sides. When a sterile person stands on a platform, the low area of the gown brought to table level must not brush against the sterile table.
- Sterile persons lift contents from packages by reaching down and lifting them straight up while holding elbow high.
- Sterile persons keep well within the sterile area. They must allow a wide margin for safety when passing unsterile areas and follow the rules for passing.
 - Sterile persons stand at a safe distance from the operating field when draping the patient.
 - Sterile persons pass each other back to back or face to face.
 - A sterile person turns their back to a non-sterile person or area when passing.
 - A sterile person faces a sterile field when passing it.
 - A sterile person should ask a non-sterile person to step aside further than try to crowd past them.
- Sterile persons should observe the following:
 - a. Stay in the room. A corridor is considered non-sterile.
 - b. They should remain standing, facing, and near the sterile tables if waiting for the procedure to start.
- Change punctured gloves or contaminated gowns immediately.
- If a solution soaks through a sterile area, the whole area is not sterile. The drape or towel is covered or replaced with a dry sterile covering.
- The Scrub person sets containers to be filled at the edge of the sterile field. The Circulating nurse stands near the table to fill them.
- The surgical team members will turn away from the sterile field to have the perspiration mopped from their brow.
- Articles dropped below waist level are discarded. The edge of anything that encloses a sterile item is not considered sterile, i.e. edges of sterile wrappers, caps on solution containers, test tube covers. Since there is no definite line separating sterile from unsterile, the edge is always considered unsterile.
- Sterile packages are placed only on dry areas.
- Linen packages from the sterilizer are permitted to cool and dry so that they will not become damp for steam condensation when placed on the storage self.
- If in doubt about the sterility of any item, consider it unsterile.

Attachments:

No Attachments