The 2017/2018 flu season is shaping up to be one of the worst in recent record. With a high volume of flu admissions this year, nurses play a critical role in preventing the spread of the flu to other hospitalized patients and implementing isolation precautions, especially the need to wear a surgical or isolation mask and perform careful hand hygiene.

Dynamic Health™, an innovative new evidence-based competency checklist below will help nurses and allied health professionals master critical skills. Users will find current, relevant, evidence-based information on core nursing competencies, transcultural care, and so much more.

PRE-PROCEDURE STEPS

1. Verify that the patient is placed in a private room, if possible
2. Maintain patient isolation by keeping the door to the patient’s room closed
3. Determine if the patient/family requires special considerations regarding communication. Make arrangements to meet these needs if they are present.
4. Introduce yourself
5. Review the facility/unit specific protocol for implementing isolation precautions, if one is available
6. Verify completion of facility informed consent, if necessary
7. Review the patient’s medical history/medical record
8. Assess general health status, including pain level and provide prescribed analgesic, if necessary
9. Maintain level of infection precautions, as appropriate
10. The infectious agent will not spread to anyone who cares for or visits with the patient
11. Perform hand hygiene and don a surgical or isolation mask prior to entering the patient’s room
12. Protect against exposure to the pathogen
13. Don eye protection or an eye shield, according to facility protocol and the risk for exposure to body fluids
14. Place a wet/dry suction apparatus, if available, outside the entrance to the patient’s room
15. Don gloves, if indicated. Pull the wrist of the gloves over the cuffs of the gown.
16. Position the patient’s bed away from adjacent beds and maintain patient isolation
17. Limit patient movement beyond the confines of the room
18. The patient should perform hand hygiene and don a standard surgical or isolation mask at all times
19. Educate the patient to adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (e.g., cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing/sneezing, dispose of the tissue in a trash receptacle, and avoid close contact with others)

POST-PROCEDURE STEPS

1. Instruct the patient in appropriate post-procedure care
2. After handwashing, introduce yourself
3. Instruct the patient in appropriate post-procedure care
4. Physically assist the patient with removing the surgical or isolation mask
5. Wash hands with soap and water and apply alcohol-based hand rub
6. Request the patient to perform hand hygiene
7. Remove or assist the patient with removing required PPE
8. Discard used materials appropriately and remove and discard PPE, everything but the respirator (if the patient is still on isolation precautions).
9. Notify staff members and visitors that droplet precautions are being observed
10. The infectious agent will not spread to anyone who cares for or visits with the patient
11. Support strategies will be initiated by clinical staff and/or family members to reduce adverse outcomes
12. The patient’s room will be decontaminated by the hospital’s cleaning team
13. Monitor the patient for signs and symptoms of disease
14. Assist the patient and family with accessing resources/controlling risk factors
15. Administer prescribed medications and treatments
16. Assess general health status, including pain level and provide prescribed analgesic, if necessary
17. Verify that isolation precautions and any barrier precautions are still in effect
18. The patient should perform hand hygiene and don a standard surgical or isolation mask at all times
19. Educate the patient to adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (e.g., cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing/sneezing, dispose of the tissue in a trash receptacle, and avoid close contact with others)

DROPLET PRECAUTIONS

1. Place a wet/dry suction apparatus, if available, outside the entrance to the patient’s room
2. Position the patient’s bed away from adjacent beds and maintain patient isolation
3. Exit the patient’s room and close the door
4. Remove the mask by grasping the back ties or elastic—DO NOT TOUCH THE FRONT OF THE MASK
5. If wearing a respirator, use appropriate technique to avoid contaminating self and equipment
6. Note: The respirator can be discarded in a biohazard container or saved, per facility protocol, and placed in a labeled, closed bag for future use by the same clinician within a prescribed period of time
7. If wearing a respirator, wait until removing the respirator outside the patient’s room to perform hand hygiene. Many facilities include alcohol-based hand rub as part of the isolation cart supplies so
8. Note: Reusable dishware and utensils may be used for patients on isolation precautions because
9. Place a notice on the isolation card advising of the presence of latex-based items, if applicable.
10. Locate an isolation cart stocked with necessary PPE to the anteroom or the area immediately
11. Determine the patient’s isolation needs, but not to exceed the level of precautions currently in effect
12. Don additional PPE if there is risk for exposure to bodily fluids or contact with contaminated materials
13. Don eye protection or an eye shield, according to facility protocol and the risk for exposure to body fluids
14. Don gloves, if indicated. Pull the wrist of the gloves over the cuffs of the gown.
15. Assess general health status, including pain level and provide prescribed analgesic, if necessary
16. Verify that isolation precautions and any barrier precautions are still in effect
17. Verify that all patient-care equipment (e.g., blood pressure cuff) is disposable, or if non-disposable equipment must be used, is dedicated for the sole use for the patient on isolation precautions
18. The patient should perform hand hygiene and don a standard surgical or isolation mask at all times
19. Educate the patient to adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (e.g., cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing/sneezing, dispose of the tissue in a trash receptacle, and avoid close contact with others)

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