

# Hygiene in nursing



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## **ESSENTIAL NURSING SKILLS**

### **Unit 1 – Introduction to the programme**

During the programme we found out that if we are to prevent healthcare associated infections it is important we have knowledge of how and why we are trying to prevent infections in the first instance. The five units of the cleanliness champions learned us about the dangers of infection and more importantly how to eliminate them.

Many people come into hospitals without showing any symptoms of HAI's and yet despite all the information available these infections continue to rise and result in many fatalities.

One way in which HAI's can be minimised is through use of Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs). The most basic method is washing our hands using alcohol gel as we enter and exit the ward. Other methods would be use of aprons, gloves and proper footwear when dealing with soilage and body fluids. Other steps can include covering cuts, avoiding needle stick injuries by disposing of sharps properly, sterilising equipment after use, and wherever possible using disposable equipment.

### **Unit 2 – The chain of infection**

We learned that any infection requires a source or reservoir of infection and that they need proper conditions if they are to live, these include warmth, moisture and a food source. Microorganisms can be transmitted in many ways including diarrhoea, stools or vomiting, body fluids such as blood, droplets in coughing, and through the skin if a person has sores on their body. If we can protect against the transmission of microorganisms then

transmission of infections is minimised. Infection can be prevented through disposal of bodily fluids, spillages and of course washing our hands before and after contact with each patient.

Isolating patients who may have an infection such as MRSA as early as possible into a single room, is one way we learned that transmission to others can be prevented. One important fact we learned was the earlier infection is dealt with by putting in place control measures, the more we can do to stop the spreading of infection happening.

### **Unit 3 – Hand hygiene**

We learned hand hygiene is the most important factor in reducing and avoiding HAI's, all staff must adhere to hand hygiene practices and this includes washing hands before and after dealing with patients, after handling laundry, if we are going to use a piece of equipment or even entering or leaving the ward.

### **Unit 4 – Personal Protective Equipment**

Personal Protective Equipment was another area where we can minimise risk to patients. PPE includes gloves, aprons, masks and foot protection, but we must not think that because we are wearing PPE that we can ignore safe methods of working. PPE has to be changed between patients and may have to be changed between different activities carried out on the same patient.

### **Unit 5 – Safe Use and Disposal of Sharps**

Sharps were another area found to cause a great deal of risk and yet injuries could be prevented by disposing of these into sharp bins and handling sharps as little as possible. The cleanliness champion's programme gives us

a greater understanding of the dangers in the workplace, but through the programme our knowledge gained we can help to minimise the dangers and spread of infection.