Infection Control Guidelines for Pharmacy Students

These guidelines are intended to be used by pharmacy students while on clerkships, and may be superceded by more restrictive guidelines adopted by the Nebraska Health Systems or their Medical Staff, or other institutions where they will be completing rotations.

It is important to understand that the AIDS virus is not transmitted by common causal contact, but by inoculation with body fluids containing the virus. Although the major focus of these guidelines is on AIDS precautions, it is important that students follow all established infection control policies to protect themselves and also those patients with whom they come in contact.

The following guidelines apply to all patient contact:

1. Hands should be washed before and after any patient contact.
2. Gloves should be worn at times when you may be in direct contact with patients's blood, urine, stool, open wounds, or other body secretions.
3. To protect the patient, you should wear a mask if you have a cold or other upper respiratory infection.
4. All isolation procedures that are posted on patients' doors should be strictly followed.
5. Needles should be disposed of by placing them in a puncture-resistant container used specifically for that purpose. Needles should not be resheathed before disposal.

In addition, the following guidelines apply specifically to patients who have AIDS or are known to be HIV positive.

1. There is no need for full isolation garb, i.e., gowns, masks, etc., when providing routine care to AIDS patients. Taking unneeded precautions may make it more difficult for patients and their families to cope with this illness.
2. Masks are necessary only when the patient has a lung infection such as tuberculosis and is actively coughing, or when there is a chance that body fluids will be aerosolized. To protect the patient, you should wear a mask if you have a cold or other upper respiratory infection.
3. It may be necessary to restrict access to AIDS patients' rooms for reasons of patient emotional well-being.

Students should contact their preceptors if they have any questions regarding the interpretation or application of these guidelines.

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