Nursing Know How: Infectious Disease

We have our first diagnosed case of Ebola….and many nurses are anxious, asking about patient management and healthcare team risk of infection. As with any other infectious disease, we as nurses must rely on our nursing education and preparation in the management of the patient. We have been taught from our nursing infancy to be an advocate for patients, a safeguard against the further spread of infection.....and how do we do that? With our clinical know how! As with any other infectious disease these basic principles apply:

- **Isolate the patient appropriately** (standard, contact, droplet, airborne)
- **Wear appropriate PPE for the isolation precautions**, donning and removing PPE appropriately.
- **Restrict visitors**: Avoid entry of visitors into the patient’s room. Exceptions may be considered on a case by case basis for those who are essential for the patient's wellbeing. A logbook should be kept to document all persons entering the patient's room. See CDC's [infection control guidance](https://www.cdc.gov) on procedures for monitoring, managing, and training of visitors.
- **Avoid aerosol-generating procedures**: Avoid aerosol-generating procedures to prevent the spread of infection. If performing these procedures, PPE should include respiratory protection (N95 or higher filtering facepiece respirator) and the procedure should be performed in an airborne infection isolation room.
- **Implement appropriate environmental infection control measures**: Diligent environmental cleaning and disinfection and safe handling of potentially contaminated materials is of paramount importance, as blood, sweat, vomit, feces, urine and other body secretions represent potentially infectious materials should be done following hospital protocols.

Ebola is here. Yes. But we as nurses we must manage the spread of disease armed with our infection control knowledge and procedures to protect ourselves, our colleagues, and to render the most appropriate and timely care to the patient.

**Questions?**

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