PRESENTER'S GUIDE

"INFECTION CONTROL IN HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS… FOR OFFICE AND FACILITIES EMPLOYEES"

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OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

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The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **Healthcare facilities are very busy places, with lots of people sharing a limited amount of space.**

- **And every time someone enters your facility, there is a chance that they can introduce bacteria, fungi, viruses or other harmful organisms into the environment.**
  — If these are not eliminated quickly, they can infect someone else.
  — The infection could then easily be spread to a number of other people.

- **Fortunately, you can help to stop the spread of infection if you remove these pathogens from your environment before anyone comes into contact with them.**
  — One of the easiest and most effective ways to do this is by ensuring that all equipment and surfaces are cleaned and sterilized throughout the day.

- **This begins with choosing the right cleaning products for the job you're doing.**
  — All of the cleansers that you use should be approved for use in healthcare environments, and effectively kill harmful microorganisms.

- **But there are other factors to consider when you select a cleanser as well.**
  — Different surfaces require different types of cleansers, and not all products have the same levels of disinfection.

- **You can find information about when and how to use a cleaning product by reading its label or consulting its Safety Data Sheet (SDS).**

- **There you will find the manufacturer's instructions regarding…**
  — Whether it should be diluted.
  — How to use it properly and safely.
  — Any personal protective equipment (PPE) that you need to wear when you are working with it.

- **If you have questions about which products or PPE you should use for the jobs you are doing, ask your supervisor.**

- **While selecting the <u>right</u> cleanser is vital to infection control, it's also important to know how <u>often</u> you need to use it.**
  — Surfaces that are touched by many people throughout the day, such as door handles, light switches and elevator buttons, are more likely to harbor bacteria, viruses and other infectious agents.
  — By cleaning and disinfecting these surfaces frequently, you can help to eliminate the organisms and reduce the risk that they will be transmitted to others.

- **Properly disposing of waste is another key part of controlling infection.**
  — This can be more difficult than you may think. In addition to general waste, you may also be handling medical, hazardous or "sharps" waste… all of which have their own procedures for disposal.

- **To find information about how to handle different types of waste, you can consult the guidelines provided by your state or local health department, as well as OSHA and EPA regulations.**
    - If you have specific questions about how to dispose of the waste in your facility, you can ask your organization's Medical Waste Department, or your supervisor.

- **Working in a healthcare facility, you know how easily infection can spread.**
    - Keeping your environment clean and sterilized can go a long way towards preventing this, but there are also other things that you can do "personally" to lower this risk.

- **One of the simplest and most effective ways to help control infection is to wash your hands… thoroughly and often.**
    - If you do it properly, handwashing can eliminate almost 99% of the harmful organisms that may accumulate there.
    - But to effectively stop the spread of infection, you need to know when to wash your hands… as well as the technique that you should use to do it.

- **To ensure that your hands are free from any organisms you have picked up, you should wash them after you…**
    - Come into contact with bodily fluids.
    - Use the restroom.
    - Cough, sneeze or blow your nose.
    - Touch contaminated surfaces or objects.
    - Touch your face, nose or mouth.
    - … or handle waste or soiled materials.

- **Sometimes, it might be necessary to wash your hands both before and after a task, such as when you handle medical equipment.**

- **You also need to know the proper technique to use for your handwashing to be effective.**
    - First, wet your hands with clean, running water. Apply soap and rub your hands together to create a rich lather.
    - Make sure to cover all of the surfaces, including the backs, palms, between the fingers and under the nails.
    - You should pay special attention to areas where pathogens like to reside, such as your fingertips, thumbs and wrists.

- **You should then continue to rub your hands for at least 20 seconds.**
    - Rinse the soap off under clean, running water (if possible, turn off the faucet with a paper towel to avoid recontaminating yourself).
    - Finally, use a paper towel or an air dryer to dry off thoroughly, starting at your fingers and working your way up to your wrist.

- **In some cases, you may also need to use alcohol-based sanitizer after handwashing (remember, to remove organisms effectively, it must have an alcohol concentration of 60%-95%).**
    - When there is no source of water nearby, hand sanitizer can also be used to disinfect in between hand washings.
    - But while hand sanitizers are effective at killing many types of pathogens, they are not as effective for removing dirt and grease.
    - So, it's important to make sure that you wash your hands as often as you can, even if you use hand sanitizer regularly.

- **In addition to washing your hands, there are other precautions that you can take to protect yourself and others from infection.**
  - Using personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks and goggles can be an effective way to <u>prevent coming into contact</u> with harmful organisms in the first place.
  - This PPE will not only protect you from developing an infection yourself, but also keeps you from <u>releasing</u> organisms into your environment that can cause infection to spread.

- **Another way you can help to stop the spread of infection is by practicing good personal hygiene at home.**
  - This begins with bathing or showering regularly (pathogens can be found on your hair and skin and can easily be transferred to anything that you come into contact with).
  - So to avoid contaminating your work environment, you should make sure that you bathe or shower before you <u>come to</u> your facility.

- **But your body is not the only thing that needs to be kept clean.**
  - Dirty clothes can harbor harmful organisms as well.
  - By washing your clothes when you get home, and always wearing <u>clean</u> clothing to work, you can help to ensure that you don't bring these pathogens into your facility.

- **And don't forget to keep your nails properly trimmed and clean.**
  - Infections especially like to "hide" in these places.

- **All of these personal practices can help to prevent a buildup of bacteria, fungi and other harmful organisms that may be present in your environment and can "travel" with you wherever you go… which can prevent the spread of infections that they can cause.**

- **Another thing that you can do to prevent infections before they start is to make sure you get regular immunizations.**
  - Keeping your vaccinations up to date can help you develop immunity to specific pathogens.
  - This will not only protect you from infection, it can reduce the risk that you will transmit infectious organisms to other people.

- **In healthcare settings, preventing the spread of infection is one of the best ways to ensure that everyone stays safe and healthy.**
  - That's why several government agencies have created regulations and guidelines regarding how to control infection.... and all healthcare facilities need to follow them.

- **One vital part of infection control is knowing how to work with blood and other infectious materials safely.**
  - If these substances are not handled properly, employees could be exposed to bloodborne pathogens, such as HIV and Hepatitis B and C.

- **To address this risk, the U. S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) developed the Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) Standard.**
    - The standard requires healthcare facilities to develop and implement an Exposure Control Plan for their operations.
    - Your Plan should outline the measures that your facility will take to minimize employee exposure to bloodborne pathogens and other potentially infectious materials (OPIMs).

- **Your facility is also required to…**
    - Establish processes and procedures for safely handling and disposing of infectious waste.
    - Provide you with the equipment and training that you need to protect yourself from exposure to both of these types of pathogens.

- **The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is another organization that is particularly interested in helping facilities prevent the spread of infection and has established a set of guidelines for controlling infection in healthcare environments. They outline…**
    - Processes and procedures that should be used when you are cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and equipment.
    - How and when to wear personal protective equipment (PPE).
    - How you should dispose of different types of waste.

- **Good ventilation and air filtration systems can help reduce the risk of infection spreading through the <u>air</u>, so the CDC guidelines also address controlling the air quality in your facility.**

- **But when it comes to infection control, the quality of the <u>water</u> that you use is just as important as the quality of the air that you breathe.**
  - ― By following the CDC's guidelines on how to maintain good quality water, your facility can help to ensure that the water you're using is free from harmful organisms that can cause infection to spread.

- **In addition to the federal government's regulations, your state and local health departments may have other infection control standards you must meet.**
  - ― You can get details regarding all of these regulations and guidelines by going to OSHA's, the CDC's and your state and local government's websites… or by talking to your supervisor.

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- **When you work in a healthcare facility, keeping everyone safe and healthy is always your number one priority.**

- **By taking measures to keep your environment free from harmful organisms, you are demonstrating your commitment to protecting staff, patients and the community as a whole from spreading infection.**

- **Infections can show up <u>anywhere</u> in a healthcare facility, not just in operating and patient rooms.**

- **Controlling infections in healthcare facilities can be challenging, because harmful organisms can not only spread easily, but there are so many people coming and going, many of whom are sick already.**

- **Several government agencies have developed regulations and guidelines for infection control in healthcare facilities, including OSHA, the CDC and various state and local governments.**

- **Following the procedures that your facility has in place for cleaning, disinfecting and waste disposal can help to effectively control infection in your environment.**

- **You can do your part personally to prevent the spread of infection by maintaining good personal hygiene and keeping your vaccinations up-to-date.**

- **There can be a lot to remember, but when everyone works together to stop the spread of infection, you can make your facility a safer and healthier place… every day!**