Answer Guidance

# Chapter 23: Aseptic technique and specimen collection

## Activity answer guidance

### Activity 23.1

Reflect on the aseptic techniques you have observed being carried out by the nurses you have been working with:

 Did they all do it the same way?

 What elements were common to all procedures observed?

 Did the option to use equipment such as gloves or a dressing tray/trolley require discussion? If so, how did you reach a decision regarding what was used?

 Do you think any elements of the chain of infection were broken?

#### Answer guidance:

You have been asked to reflect on the aseptic technique you have seen in practice and to consider:

Did all nurses do this in the same way*: all nurses should follow the same principles of the aseptic technique but you may observe small differences in the way nurses practice this skill depending on their level of expertise and attitude/ awareness of infection control. You may see nurses cutting corners because they are in a hurry or do not have the correct equipment and it is important to raise this as a concern.*

What elements were common to all procedures observed*: it may be that all nurses used a special trolley and cleaned it thoroughly before use, it may be that they use a sterile dressing pack, wash their hands, wear gloves and aprons, or use sterile gloves. It may be that they keep their sterile field and do not put used or dirty equipment in the field. It may be that all nurses explain the procedure to the patient and seek consent. It may be the method of waste* *disposal. There are many things that will be similar as nurses should be following trust guidelines for aseptic technique. There may have been discussion around which elements were required e.g. which kind of gloves, depending on the procedure*.

Do you think any elements of the chain of infection were broken*: You will need to reflect on the practice you observed and see if you identified a break in the chain of infection e.g. contamination of the hands, wound, or invasive devices*.

### Activity 23.2

You and your practice supervisors are planning to dress a patient’s wound while they are sitting in the living room of their home. The room is very unclean—there are six cats that live in the house and they have used the living room carpet as a litter tray. The facilities for you to wash your hands are poor, the sink is dirty and there is no hand towel, no hot water, and only a trickle of cold.

What actions would you take to reduce contamination of the wound?

#### Answer guidance:

*It is really important to maintain asepsis, but this can often be challenging in the community as homes are not sterile environments and often contain pets, children, carpets and sinks full of pots, etc. It is important to be prepared and take as much with you as you can. For example, use a dressing pack to make a sterile field and bring some hand gel. You could also ring the patient whilst you are on your way to ensure they remove any pets to another room. You will need to wear PPE–sterile gloves and an apron.*

### Activity 23.3

Tilly is 3 months old and has persistently loose, watery, and offensive-smelling bowel motions. Her mother has been asked to collect a stool specimen so it can be tested but is uncertain how she should do this. How would you explain the procedure?

#### Answer guidance:

*Mum would need a specimen container and a specimen bag. She would be provided with a special scoop in the specimen container to help her collect the sample. She could wear a pair* *of gloves to protect herself as the baby may have some kind of infection, but as she regularly changes Tilly’s bum it would be sufficient to ensure she washes her hands thoroughly afterward with warm, soapy water. She would need to wait for Tilly’s next bowel motion and then collect a sample using the scoop. The sample of poo must be fresh. You could also provide a leaflet with visual pictures to explain the procedure to her. It would be important to ensure the sample is not contaminated by creams or lotions.*

### Activity 23.4

Jasmin is 3 years old and requires a blood sample to be taken:

 What might help Jasmin feel safe and comfortable so that the sample can be collected?

 Jasmin’s mum is with her and is very anxious and concerned about the blood test. How can you ensure that her worries do not impact Jasmin’s care?

#### Answer guidance:

*Before undertaking the procedure it would be very important to explain the procedure fully to Jasmine’s mum, using simple terminology and explaining the rationale for the procedure. If Jasmin’s mum is anxious this will be obvious to Jasmin and make her less likely to be compliant. You can explain to Jasmin’s mum that you will need her help as she will be able to reassure Jasmin and distract her whilst you perform the procedure.*

*You should complete the lab forms before beginning the procedure. You will need to gather all equipment and wash your hands to ensure asepsis. You should wear gloves and an apron. Ensure Jasmin and her mum are comfortable and happy for the procedure to take place. You may wish to have a colleague assist in distracting Jasmin, there are many distraction techniques in children’s nursing such as blowing bubbles to take their mind off the task at hand! You would need to ensure the safe disposal of sharps at the end of the procedure.*

## Case study answer guidance

### Case study 23.1: Tom

Tom is 15 and has a learning disability. He has a chronic wound on his leg which is very painful and smells offensive. Tom is very conscious of the smell and dislikes having his dressing changed. He expresses his anxiety through his behavior, which can be perceived as aggressive at times, especially by people who do not know him.

Tom really enjoys bathing, because he finds it relaxes him and he loves playing with his collection of boats, and plastic dinosaurs.

To make Tom’s dressing changes less stressful for him, your practice supervisor wants to use his bath as an opportunity to undertake his dressing change.

 What needs to be considered in order to prevent any contamination and support wound healing?

#### Answer guidance:

*A plan has been agreed upon to wash Tom’s legs in the bath because he likes to play with his toy boats and dinosaurs. These would be a great distraction technique. It will make the sterile technique more challenging. It will be important to remove all dressings before sitting Tom in the bathwater, otherwise, the water may be contaminated by the smelly exudate. The bathwater should not contain any perfumed bubble bath with could irritate the wound. It would then be important to ensure the leg is fully clean and dry before applying clean dressings using a sterile technique.*

### Case study 23.2: Mrs. Neumann

Mrs. Neumann is 58 and is undergoing a pre-operative assessment prior to a total hip replacement. As part of this, she requires a “screen” for MRSA. This is local hospital policy. Mrs. Neumann is very anxious about this and has read about “superbugs” in the media. She is worried that the fact she is having a screen means that she may have MRSA.

 How will you reassure Mrs. Neumann regarding the need for an MRSA screen and gain her consent for the test (a nose swab)?

 What additional information can you provide for her while she awaits the result?

#### Answer guidance:

*We will gain consent from Mrs. Neuman by explaining the need for the swabs and the quick and simple procedure. It’s important to stress that all patients are swabbed for MRSA on admission and at regular points during their admission so that we can reduce the spread of MRSA, and that this has actually proved really effective. We could provide her with a leaflet to explain the procedure and what happens after her swab is taken. We could explain that MRSA is a bug that usually lives harmlessly on the skin of around 1 in 30 people and it does not usually make you ill, however, it can cause a problem when you have surgery as it can get into your wound.*