



Infection Control A COVID-19 Essential

Dr. Jasmine Rathee*

Corresponding Author: Dr. Jasmine Rathee, Dental Surgeon(BDS), Maulana Azad Institute Of Dental Sciences, Gurgaon, Haryana, India.

Copy Right: © 2021 Dr. Jasmine Rathee. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Received Date: November 01, 2021

Published Date: December 01, 2021

According to the World Health Organisation, Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) is a scientific approach and practical solution designed to prevent harm caused by infection to patients and health workers which mainly comprises of the measures that prevent the spread of infection. IPC in general medical practice and daily routine is highly important for all of us, especially in this tough time of COVID-19. As we all have faced the pandemic for almost 2 years, most of us have realized the necessity of performing infection control in our lives. We can say that it has prevented so many people from getting infected or from the severity of the infection. This article will explain that why is Infection Control a COVID-19 essential and how is it practiced?

Benefits Of Infection Prevention & Control (IPC)

- Protection of patients
- Protection of Healthcare Workers (HCWs)
- Protection of community

Why is IPC A Covid-19 Essential?

- It decreases the likelihood of getting infected.
- It is essential in healthcare so that patient doesn't get HAI (Hospital Acquired Infection).
- Important to control the infection chain or the community spread.
- Fewer chances of getting a severe infection.
- Even if the individual gets infected, he/she can protect their family members and other people from getting infected by performing proper infection control.
- Provides a safer environment in healthcare, workplaces and other public places.

How is IPC Practiced? Or Different Ways to Perform Infection Control

- **HAND HYGIENE**- Our hands are one of the main key links in the chain of transmission. So, performing hand hygiene is quite necessary, this includes using appropriate products and techniques:-

(a) Soap + Water: washing hands for 40-60 seconds

(b) Alcohol-based Hand Rub: rub hands for 20-30 seconds (This is done when soap and water is unavailable)

According to WHO, these are the steps to perform hand hygiene-

Step 1: Wet Hands. Wet your hands and apply enough liquid soap to create a good lather.

Step 2: Rub Palms Together.

Step 3: Rub the Back of your Hands.

Step 4: Interlink Your Fingers.

Step 5: Cup Your Fingers.

Step 6: Clean the Thumbs.

Step 7: Rub Palms with Your Fingers.

• **RESPIRATORY HYGIENE/COUGH ETIQUETTE**- Individuals suspected of having infections, signs & symptoms must ensure that he/she is performing respiratory hygiene as it prevents the spread of further infection. This can be done in the following ways-

- a) Using face masks (surgical/N-95)
- b) Avoid touching hand, mouth, or nose.
- c) Covering the mouth and nose with a tissue while coughing or sneezing (the proper disposal of the used tissue)
- d) disposal of the used tissue)
- e) Performing hand hygiene after getting in contact with respiratory secretions or
- f) contaminated surfaces/objects.
- g) Don't spit in the open.

• **SOCIAL DISTANCING**- Maintaining social distancing is a highly recommended precaution by WHO and other medical associations as it reduces the risk of infection especially in public places where a high number of people are present. Since the beginning of the pandemic, it has been a major protocol in most places (hospitals, markets, schools, institutions, etc). It is portrayed as -

- (a) Maintain at least a 1-meter distance between yourself and others.
- (b) The further away, the better.
- (c) Avoid the 3Cs: spaces that are closed, crowded, or involve close contact.

• **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)**- PPE has been a major help to the healthcare workers in this pandemic. It provides high-quality fully covered protection from any infection, chances of getting infected are decreased. Also, the PPE must be used and disposed of using proper disposal measures. It consists of-

- (a) Face Mask
- (b) N-95 Mask
- (c) Face Shield
- (d) Eyewear
- (e) Gown
- (f) Gloves
- (g) Head Cap

(h) Shoe Cover

- **ISOLATION**- It refers to the separation of infected people from the ones who are uninfected to keep the disease from spreading. Majorly, doctors and local healthcare departments take these precautions and the people who are infected or may have symptoms of COVID-19. This can depend upon the severity of infection i.e highly symptomatic patients are hospitalized in isolation units and the patients with mild symptoms are asked to isolate themselves at home with proper precautions.

- **QUARANTINE**- It includes separating people and limiting the movement of people who have or may have been exposed to the disease to see if they're infected. The quarantine can mean staying at a specific facility or staying at home.

If an individual might have been exposed to COVID-19 or had close contact with an infected person, the following are recommended:-

- (a) Staying at home for 14 days and monitoring the symptoms.
- (b) Watch for common signs and symptoms, such as fever, cough or shortness of breath.
- (c) Keep distance (6 feet, or 2 meters) between yourself and others.
- (d) Stay away from other people as much as possible, especially people at high risk of serious illness.
- (e) Wear a mask if contact with other people can't be avoided.
- (f) Isolate yourself at home if you feel ill. Contact your doctor if symptoms worsen.

- **CLEANING & DISINFECTION**- Practicing these two, in general, is itself important in our daily lives as it prevents infection from any pathogen/ any disease. Products recommended by WHO are-

- (a) Liquid Sodium Hypochlorite
- (b) Solid/Powdered Calcium Hypochlorite

-These formulations dissolve in water to create a dilute aqueous chlorine solution in which undissociated Hypochlorous acid (HOCl) is active as the antimicrobial compound. Hypochlorite displays a broad spectrum of antimicrobial activity and is effective against several common pathogens at various concentrations.

-If disinfectants are to be applied, this should be done with a cloth or wipe that has been soaked in disinfectant.

-Particular attention should be paid to environmental cleaning of high-touch surfaces and items, such as light switches, bed rails, door handles, intravenous pumps, tables, water/beverage pitchers, trays, mobile cart rails and sinks, which should be performed frequently. However, all touchable surfaces should be disinfected.

-Cleaning practices and cleanliness should be routinely monitored.

Conclusion

- Infection Control applies in all the settings.
- Standard precautions must be taken by every person in all kinds of workplaces and at home.
- Education and awareness regarding COVID-19 must be given/spread to everyone in the urban as well as rural areas so that everybody can understand the tough situation the whole world is dealing with and can do their best to prevent themselves from getting infected.
- Healthcare workers must take care of themselves and their patients.

If we consider this deeply, correct brushing along with good oral health is beneficial for overall body and health as well as mental health. A healthy person is a happy person. Finally, overzealous brushing is not healthy.