

DEPARTMENT: Infection Control

POLICY: IC - 350

SUBJECT: Immunocompromised Host Precautions

PURPOSE: To provide standardized guidelines to provide the best possible outcome when caring for the immunocompromised patient based on best practices.

RESPONSIBILITY:

- All Clinical Staff
- Dietary Staff
- Infection Control

POLICY:

1. Patients who have an **absolute Neutrophil count (ANC) of 1,000 cells/mm³ or less** will be placed in immunocompromised host precautions. NEUT # on the lab report is the same as the ANC (this value is computed by adding the neutrophils and the band values on the lab report).
2. A sign for immunocompromised host precautions will be placed on the door of the patient's room.
3. Immunocompromised host precautions will be initiated by the physician, registered nurse, or the infection control practitioner. These precautions will be utilized in addition to Universal Precautions (See Policy #320 Blood borne Pathogens) and applicable Communicable Disease Precautions (See IC Policy #344).
4. Immunocompromised Host Precautions will remain in effect until the ANC has been greater than 1000 cells/mm³ for twenty-four hours, or they are lifted by the physician.
5. Patient Placement
 - a. Immunocompromised patients will be placed in a private room with the door closed. Negative pressure rooms will not be used for patients who are immunocompromised unless the physician determines that the patient requires Airborne Precautions.
 - b. If no private rooms are available, immunocompromised patients without evidence of communicable disease or recent exposure to a communicable disease within the last four weeks may be assigned to the same room.
 - c. Avoid placing patient in rooms where construction is being performed near by or in rooms where maintenance personnel are working.
6. Personal Protective Equipment
 - a. Universal precautions will be employed with immunocompromised patients. Good hand hygiene of staff, the patient, and any visitors is essential for preventing the transmission of infections especially immunocompromised patients.
 - b. Masks are also worn by staff who have upper respiratory infections (**if it is absolutely necessary for them to enter the patient's room**) to prevent discharging droplets and airborne particles into the patient's environment.
7. Food Preparation and Dietary Management
 - a. Food and beverages should not be brought in from the outside to patients on immunocompromised precautions, unless approved by the physician.
 - b. The following foods will not be served to immunocompromised patients:

- i. Raw or uncooked brewer's yeast, tofu, meat (includes hot dogs), fish, poultry, and eggs
 - ii. No cold-smoked fish, lox or pickled fish
 - iii. Unpasteurized or raw honey, fruit and vegetable juices, milk and milk products including cheese (including brie, feta, or farmer's cheese) and yogurt
 - iv. Aged cheeses, hot (e.g., hot chili pepper) cheese, farmer's cheese, feta cheese
 - v. Cheese based salad dressings which require refrigeration (such as blue cheese or Roquefort)
 - vi. Unwashed raw fruits and vegetables
 - vii. Miso products, Tempeh, or Mate tea
- 8. Transportation of patient: Immunocompromised patients who require transportation to other departments for procedures will wear a surgical mask during the transfer and the procedure.
- 9. Visitors: Persons who are exhibiting signs and symptoms of a communicable diseases, have had a recent close exposure to a communicable disease or have been vaccinated with a live virus in the previous four weeks should not visit the patient.
- 10. Flowers and Plants
 - a. Flowers and plants will be handled by staff that has no direct patient contact (e.g., housekeeping). If nursing staff handle flowers or plants, gloves must be worn and hands washed thoroughly after gloves are removed.
 - b. Change vase water every forty-eight hours. Flowers will be taken to the clean utility room to change water to prevent the aerosolizing of water into the environment when the vase water is changed.
 - c. Vases left at the hospital will be sent to kitchen to be washed in the dishwasher sanicycle.

11. NURSING CARE GUIDELINES

- a. Monitor temperature and report an elevation of 100.5 and greater to the patient's physician.
- b. Skin Care
 - i. Instruct patient to wash hands and encourage good hand hygiene for both the patient and any visitors or staff.
 - ii. Encourage frequent use of lotion to avoid over drying of skin.
 - iii. Monitor skin folds and creases for cracking or sores and observe for signs of infection.
- c. Oral Care
 - i. Encourage frequent cleaning of teeth and oral mucosa. Offer oral care after meals and before bedtime at a minimum.
 - ii. Provide and encourage the use of normal saline solutions to swish and spit.
 - iii. Avoid the use of peroxide, lemon, and glycerin solutions.
 - iv. Use a soft toothbrush or sponge swabs to prevent trauma to gums and mucosa.
 - v. Discourage smoking and chewing tobacco.
- d. Activities of Daily Living
 - i. Encourage patient to maintain usual activities in room (e.g., ambulation).

- ii. Immunocompromised patients will be allowed to ambulate in the hall wearing a mask if the physician writes an order for this.
- e. Bowel Care
 - i. Monitor bowel movements and report if patient has constipation problems.
 - ii. A physician order is required prior to giving an enema or suppository since tearing of the rectal or vaginal areas increase the likelihood of developing an abscess.

REVIEW AND REVISION STATEMENT:

This policy will be reviewed and revised as necessary and at least annually by the Infection Control Practitioner, Physician Advisor, and CEO. (Original document 03/1994)

References:

Risi, G (2004), The Immunocompromised Host. APIC TEXT of Infection Control and Epidemiology, (2005), Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (APIC) 1275 K Street, NW Suite 1000, Washington DC 20005-4006

Heath, J, (2004). Infection control measures for immunocompromised populations. APIC TEXT of Infection Control and Epidemiology, (2005), Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. (APIC) 1275 K Street, NW Suite 1000, Washington DC 20005-4006