

## C2L9 - Ashley Hay

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Hi everyone, welcome back. So we are in course two, lesson nine, sterile technique and infection control. Obviously very important for surgical techs to be incredibly well-versed in this specific lesson.

So first is just knowing the difference between sterility and a sterile field. So sterility, just keep in mind, you know, it's complete absence of any kind of microorganism which we just talked about a lot in the prior lessons. So this sterility is achieved by a sterilisation method and then we maintain sterility through a sterile field.

So this is really like a defined area including maybe a draped patient, instrument tables, team members that are completely sterile and in sterile attire. And then there are strict boundaries that are maintained during surgery. And if you are in charge of the sterile field, you are also in charge of maintaining that sterility.

So, you know, for others who are taking instruments and for yourself and the field in general. You definitely also need to know what surgical contamination is. And this is when basically anything is introduced into the sterile field that is not sterile.

So if any non-sterile item person comes in contact with a sterile item or sterile field, that item or that field is no longer considered sterile and it is all considered contaminated. And then of course there's gross contamination which is contamination of a larger area. So either tissue of a patient or an environment found by something potentially infective.

So to avoid, you know, all of this, one, we want to make sure that we practise aseptic technique. So this is a method of basically used during surgery to reduce infection. And it's based on, you know, principles associated with the spread of microorganisms, right, that we talked about.

So we definitely want to make sure that we contain, confine, and reduce any kind of microorganism that is known as aseptic technique. Also know the difference between your barriers. So do you know the difference between a physical barrier and a chemical barrier? A physical barrier, some examples of that are things that we're going to use, right? PPE, so gowns, gloves, mask, or a drape.

A chemical barrier is a kind of antimicrobial agent. And then also distance, so keeping non-sterile items away from sterile items, sterile fields. So when we talk about sterile technique, we remember that a sterile field is always continually monitored.

If the field is not monitored, if you turn your back to the sterile field, you don't know, it could be contaminated. So that is why we don't do that. That was my dog in the background, just checking out your sterile field here.

And so maintaining sterility is the responsible, the responsibility rather, of the entire surgical team. But you are very frequently the gatekeeper. So it's important that you take that responsibility very seriously.

If any team member at all believes an item to be contaminated, then it is considered contaminated. And we need to kind of change out the entire field. Also important to remember, not only should you never turn your back to a sterile field, but you should never reach over a sterile field.

We should reach around to make sure that we're maintaining sterility. And then just knowing the types of different zones that are available and kind of recognised for the operating room. So there are several different zones.

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You'll see here there's a dirty zone, a clean zone, and a septic zone. And then, of course, there are different areas that fall within that, right? So where is the patient recovering? Where are we treating the patient? That's known as the theatre, the OR. And the equipment that resides within that.

Then there's clean zones, right? So reception and recovery. And then dirty zone is really anything outside of that. You also need to make sure that you understand the difference between unrestricted, semi-restricted, and fully restricted zones and what those look like.

Okay. So we've talked about hand hygiene. We've mentioned it before in a few different lessons, but you just need to know the purpose of hand hygiene is always to reduce bacteria to the absolute minimum possible.

We also want to prevent any other kind of skin conditions. So making sure that you're properly washing your hands with soap and water. And then, of course, as a healthcare provider, also make sure that you're using lotion as a barrier to help your kind of... What's the word I'm looking for? Recover.

Because we're washing our hands so much throughout the day. So definitely make sure that you are not only practising proper hand hygiene, but also proper hand care for yourself. Also, maintenance of your fingernails and polish, things like that.

Make sure that you're always familiar with your specific organisation's policy on that. Also, jewellery policies as well. And you want to just make sure that you know, in terms of fingernails, that they have to be a certain length.

That things like wraps or acrylics are typically not allowed. And then any kind of chipping nail polish is an infection risk. So make sure that, you know, you have a nail polish remover available if you need it prior to starting your shift.

And then in discussing like, when should I wash my hands? If you even have to question it, wash your hands. That's the best way to remember this for any sort of professional scenario or for any kind of exam question. If it is ever in question, wash your hands.

That's the easiest way to remember all of that. And then we need to know the difference between, you know, just regular hand washing versus a scrub in. So a surgical scrub, this is done immediately before you're putting on a sterile gown and gloves or after any kind of direct contact with blood or bodily fluids.

And of course, you know, hopefully with that direct contact, you would have already had some kind of barrier in place, but that does not matter. You would remove the barrier, wash your hands, and then begin again. There is a really nice surgical hand scrub video within that lesson.

So if you're not familiar with it by now, please make sure that you have watched that. As well as some examples of how to don, which means wear or put on basically. So how to wear and put on sterile gowns and gloves, as well as dry your hands.

And, you know, how to, when you are done with them, kind of drop them into the kit bucket. So all of those, I think you definitely need to know. As well as how to prepare, you know, a sterile field when you're opening a surgical case.

So all of that is for sure really detailed in the lesson. Make sure that, you know, you're also taking notes from your ebook as well. And then there is a really nice surgical setup video that's present.

And just really nice examples of how to create a sterile field properly, as well as just, you know, distribution of fluids, sharps handling, how to wrap and unwrap packages, things like that. Okay. So for now, I think that we have covered a lot of this content and what's most important.

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If you still have questions, make sure that you are scheduling an appointment with your coach. In the meantime, keep it up and keep studying towards your exam. All right.

Until next time.