Implementing Isolation Precautions
Are Your Nurses Checking All the Boxes?

The 2017/2018 flu season is shaping up to be one of the worst in recent record. With a high volume of flu admissions this year, nurses play a critical role in checking all the boxes when it comes to implementing isolation droplet precautions.

**PRE-PROCEDURE STEPS**

1. Verify that the patient is placed in a private room, if possible
2. Review the facility/unit specific protocol for implementing isolation precautions, if one is available
3. Determine if the patient/family requires special considerations regarding communication. Make an effort to keep them engaged and informed. For example, consider working with language specialists and providing relevant, evidence-based information on core nursing competencies, transcultural care, and emotional or psychological outcomes related to isolation precautions.

**PROCEDURE STEPS**

- **DROPLET PRECAUTIONS**
  - Don a gown, if indicated
  - Don gloves, if indicated
  - Perform hand hygiene according to facility protocol
  - Identify the patient
  - Introduce yourself
  - Review the treating clinician’s orders for isolation precautions, including the rationale for patient isolation
  - Explain the procedure
  - Review the manufacturer’s instructions for all supplies to be used, and verify that they are in good working order
  - Provide privacy for the patient
  - Attempt to locate the patient with another patient with the same diagnosis, if a private room is not available
  - As a last resort, position the patient’s bed away from adjacent beds and maintain patient isolation
  - Limit patient movement beyond the confines of the room
  - Educate family members and other visitors about the importance of maintaining droplet precautions, especially the need to wear a surgical or isolation mask and perform careful hand hygiene
  - Educate the patient to adhere to respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette (e.g., cover the mouth and nose with a tissue or flexed elbow when coughing or sneezing, wash hands immediately afterwards)

**POST-PROCEDURE STEPS**

- Follow up appropriately and ask known or documented non-compliance, but documentation
- Perform hand hygiene after leaving the patient
- Verify completion of facility informed consent, if necessary
- Recruit other staff members to assist as necessary
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