

# Implementing Infection Prevention and Control Practices

*Guide to the Standards  
for Professional Practice*

# Implementing Infection Prevention and Control Practices

## Introduction

As health professionals registered to practice in Ontario, physiotherapists have a responsibility to provide safe, quality care. This includes ensuring the implementation of appropriate infection prevention and control practices. The College's expectations for registrants with respect to infection, prevention and control are defined in the Standard for Professional Practice: Infection Control.

To assist physiotherapists in meeting the performance expectations outlined in the Standard, some key elements have been highlighted in the form of a checklist. This list is not exhaustive but rather is intended to provide physiotherapists with an optional tool that can be used to facilitate the application of the Standard into clinical practice. The checklist should not be used in isolation as the Standard provides additional information and there may also be legislative or employer requirements that are not covered in the checklist.

Although the checklist is based on the basic principles underlying appropriate infection control measures, best practice information in this area is continually evolving. For the most up to date and accurate information, registrants are encouraged to contact the experts in this area. The Standard for Professional Practice: Infection Control offers an annotated list of resources on infection control. While this list is in no way complete, the use of resources such as these will ensure that registrants' infection control practice reflects the current evolving environment.

The information in the checklist has been adapted from one of the identified experts - the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), Public Health Division, Provincial Diseases Advisory Committee's (PIDAC) "Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in all Health Care Settings, January, 2009".

The PIDAC document provides details on how to implement the steps outlined in the checklist for all health care setting and includes information on how to:

- determine and use appropriate barrier equipment
- clean, disinfect and sterilize equipment and the environment
- manage waste
- understand the concepts and applications of routine practices
- determine why and when to use additional precautions
- understand the elements for contact precautions, droplet precautions and airborne precautions

The PIDAC document also provides decision-making algorithms, sample signage and other valuable tools.

We urge you to visit their website for more information.

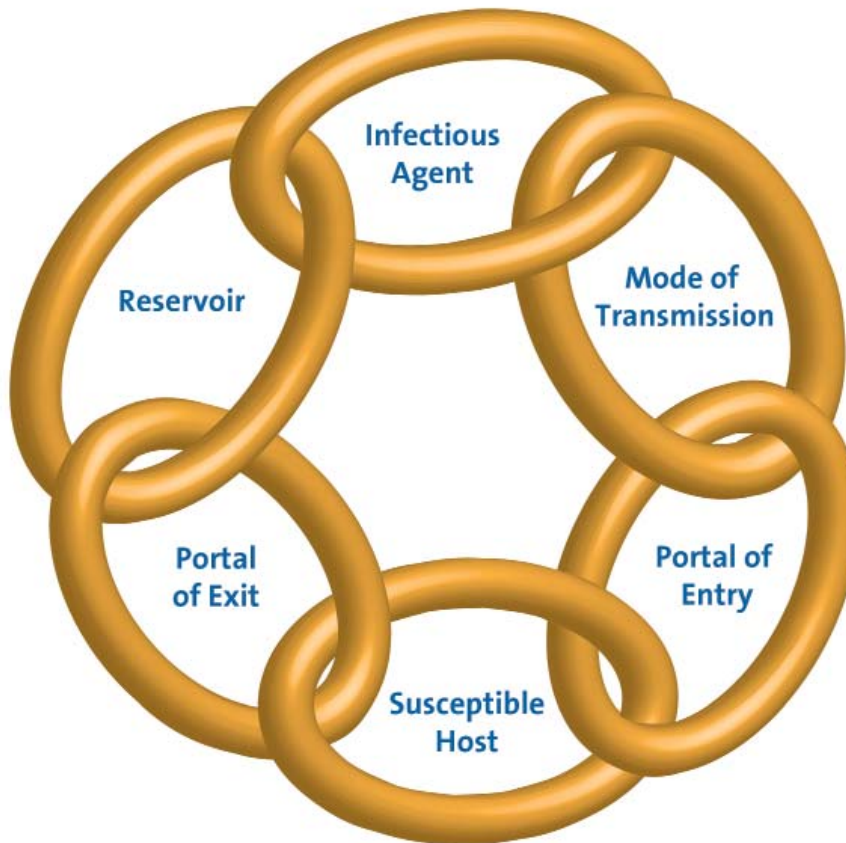
[http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/infectious/pidac/pidac\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/infectious/pidac/pidac_mn.html)

## Steps to Follow to Incorporate Appropriate Infection Prevention and Control Strategies into Daily Practice

- Develop an understanding of how infectious agents are transmitted – see the “Chain of Transmission” below
- Assess the risk of exposure before every patient encounter and identify strategies to reduce exposure and prevent transmission
  - Do you know how to assess risk and what to screen patients for?
  - If a potential exposure or transmission risk is identified, do you know what steps to take?
  - Do you understand the difference between contact precautions, droplet precautions and airborne precautions? Do you know the protective equipment required for each precaution type?
  - Have you considered alternate booking or triaging arrangements to reduce risk for vulnerable patients?
- Institute routine precautions with every patient
  - Do you understand what routine precautions are? Is the appropriate barrier equipment available? Do you know how to use and dispose of equipment?
- Implement additional precautions as needed based on the risk assessment
  - Do you understand what additional precautions means in your practice? Is the appropriate barrier equipment available? Do you know how to use and dispose of equipment?
  - Can information on additional precautions be accessed and implemented quickly and easily when the need arises?
- Devote appropriate resources to infection prevention and control
  - Has housekeeping staff received appropriate information and training on how equipment and environmental surfaces are to be cleaned / disinfected / sterilized?
  - Have you considered all equipment (i.e. not only in the clinical practice environment but also in waiting areas, restroom facilities etc)?
  - Is there an understanding of how soiled linens, sharps and other wastes should be handled?
  - Are special storage facilities or private rooms needed?
  - Are the relevant policies and procedures updated regularly and readily available?
  - Is there a mechanism in place to receive updated information, best practice advice and guidance from organizations such as the MOHLTC and Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC)?
  - Do you measure compliance with infection prevention and control strategies?
- Ensure appropriate access, supply and use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
  - Do you know how to select, put on, remove and dispose of PPE?
- Ensure good hand hygiene for all
  - Are the appropriate products, techniques, education and signage available for patients as well as staff?
  - Have patients and staff received appropriate information and instruction?

- Consider your own health
  - Are you at risk for spreading an illness? Are your immunizations up to date? Do you stay home when you are unwell and infectious?

## Chain of Transmission



**By eliminating any of the six links or breaking the chain transmission does not occur<sup>1</sup>**

1 Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care/Public Health Division/Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, January 2009