MED 101 Word List

Chapter 22

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS): Disorder of the immune system caused by a human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), a retrovirus that destroys the body’s ability to fight infection. As the disease progresses, the individual becomes overcome by disorders, including cancers and opportunistic infections. There is no known cure for AIDS.

Acyclovir: Antiviral drug used in some herpes infections.

Airborne Transmission: Spread of disease-causing microorganisms over long distances through the air.

Amoebic Dysentery: Infectious intestinal disease caused by amoebas and characterized by inflammation of the mucous membrane of the colon.

Antibodies: Specific chemical produced by B cells of the immune system in response to an antigen

Asepsis: Protecting against infection caused by pathogenic microorganisms.

Barrier: Obstacle that exists to protect an individual from contact with blood or other potentially infected materials. Called personal protective equipment (PPE); barriers include gloves, masks, face shields, laboratory coats, protective eyewear, and gowns.

Bloodborne Pathogen: Microorganism capable of causing disease found in blood or components of blood.

Carrier: Person who harbors a pathogenic organism and who is capable of transmitting the organism to others.

Caustic: Corrosive and burning; destructive to living tissue.

Cell-Mediated Immunity: The regulatory activities of T cells during the specific immune response.

Communicable: Contagious, capable of being transmitted from one person to another either directly or indirectly.

Contact Transmission: Spread of disease-causing microorganisms by directly or indirectly touching the source of the infection or by touching an object or environmental surface.

Contracting: Acquiring an infection from pathogens.

Coryza: Acute inflammation of the membranes of the nose accompanied by profuse drainage.

Cough Etiquette: Coughing/sneezing into a tissue to prevent microorganisms from spreading to others. Includes properly disposing of tissue into a waste receptacle and washing hands as soon as possible.

Debris: Remains of broken down or damaged cells or tissue.

Declination Form: Written formal refusal.

Droplet Transmission: Method of spreading disease from respiratory secretions through the air. Spread is usually confined to within 3 feet of the infected patient.

Epidemic: An infectious disease that attacks many persons at the same time in the same location.

Epidemiology: Field of science that studies the history, cause, and patterns of infectious diseases.

Excoriated: Abrasion of the epidermis by trauma, chemicals, burns, or other causes.

Excretion: Waste matter. The elimination of waste products from the body.

Expectorate: Act of coughing up material from airways that lead to the lungs.

Fomite: Substance that absorbs and transmits infectious material; for example, contaminated items such as equipment.

Gross Contamination: Highly infectious material present.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV): Virus causing AIDS; it is a retrovirus that ultimately destroys immune system cells.

Humoral Immunity: Immunity mediated by antibodies in body fluids such as plasma ad lymph.

Immune System: Body’s strong line of defense against invading microorganisms. The body recognizes foreign substances such as microorganisms and produces substances to fight them off. Antibodies, white blood cells, digestive enzymes, and resistance of the skin are some examples.

Immunoglobulins: Family of proteins capable of acting as antibodies, thereby protecting individuals from pathogenic microorganisms; also, antibodies produced by cells of the immune response system.

Immunomodulator: A substance that has the ability to change immune responses.

Immunosuppressed: Referring to a patient whose immune system is unhealthy because of disease, medication, and genetics; these patients can be particularly susceptible to attack by microorganisms.

Infection Control: Methods to eliminate or reduce the transmission of infectious microorganisms.

Infectious Agent: Pathogen responsible for a specific infectious disease.

Inflammatory Response: Body’s defense against the threat of infection or trauma. Characterized by redness, pain, heat, and swelling.

Inoculation: Injection.

Isolation: Separating a patient with certain infectious or communicable diseases from other individuals.

Isolation Categories: System of seven categories developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that isolates patients according to known infections. These categories have been condensed into three Transmission Based Precautions based on air, contact, and droplet routs of transmission.

Jet Injection: An injection given under the skin without a needle, using the force of the liquid under pressure to pierce the skin.

Lesion: Injury or wound. A circumscribed area of tissue that has been altered pathologically.

Lymphadenopathy: A disease of the lymph nodes.

Macular: Pertaining to a discoloration of a patch of skin, neither elevated nor depressed, of various colors, sizes, and shapes.

Malaise: Discomfort, uneasiness, or indisposition, often indicative of infection.

Malaria: Acute infectious disease caused by the presence of protozoan parasites within the red blood cells; usually comes from the bite of a female mosquito.

Medical Asepsis: Clean and free from infection.

Microorganism: Microscopic living creature capable of transmission and reproduction in specific circumstances.

Morbidity: Number of cases of disease in a specific population.

Mortality: The ratio of the number of deaths to a given population.

Normal Flora: Microorganisms that are normally present in a specific site.

Nosocomial: Infection acquired in a health care setting, (hospital, clinic, nursing home).

Opportunistic Infections: An infection that results from a defective immune system that cannot defend itself from pathogens normally found in the environment.

Palliative: Measures taken to relieve symptoms of disease.

Papular: Pertaining to a small, red, elevated area of the skin, solid and circumscribed.

Parenteral: Injection of a liquid substance into the body via a route other than the alimentary canal.

Pathogen: Disease-producing microorganism.

Pruritus: Itchiness.

Regulated Waste: Any waste that contains infectious material that would pose a threat due to possible transmission of pathogenic microorganism.

Resistance: Ability of the immune system to resist or withstand an infectious disease.

Scabies: Infectious skin disease caused by the itch mite (Sarcoptes scabiei), which is transmitted by direct contact with infected persons.

Scoop Technique: A one-handed technique used to “scoop” up and cover a used needle only if a sharp’s container in not immediately available, the covering (cap) over the needle is not manipulated in any way; it is then disposed of in the nearest sharps container.

Secretion: Substance produced by the cells of glandular organs from materials in the blood.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS): A viral outbreak of a respiratory illness first reported in Asia in 2003; spread by close person-to-person contact and characterized by fever and respiratory symptoms.

Sharps: Needles or scalpels or other sharp instruments that are capable of causing a penetrating or puncture wound of the skin.

Solvent: Producing a solution, dissolving.

Spill Kit: Commercially packaged materials containing supplies and equipment needed to clean up a spill of a biohazardous substance.

Sputum: Substance from the respiratory tract expelled by coughing.

Standard Precautions: Precautions developed in 1996 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that augment universal precautions and body substance isolation practices. They provide a wider range of protection and are used any time there is contact with blood, moist body fluid (except perspiration), mucous membranes, or non-intact skin.

Transmission-Based Precautions: Second tier of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines that applies to specific categories of patients and that include air, contact, and droplet precautions. Transmission-Based Precautions are always used in addition to Standard Precautions.

Trichomoniasis: Infestation with a Trichomonas parasite, which may be transmitted through sexual intercourse.

Ultrasonic Cleaner: Machine that uses the energy of high-frequency sound waves that agitate to sanitize instruments before sterilization.

Universal Precautions: Guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the protection of health care workers from infectious diseases.

Vaccine: Pharmacologic agent capable of producing artificial active immunity.