MED 101 Word List

Chapter 43

Aerobic: Organism that requires oxygen for growth.

Aerosols: Particles from potentially infectious materials that may be released in the air.

Agar: A gelatin-like substance extracted from the red algae that contains nutrients and moisture for bacterial growth.

Anaerobic: Organism that needs little or no oxygen for growth.

Biochemical Tests: Tests that show biochemical properties and reactions of bacteria to achieve identification of microorganisms; often performed in solid and liquid media.

Broth Tubes: Tubes filled with a broth substance that will support the growth of certain microorganisms.

Culture: Microorganisms cultivated in a nutrient medium.

Dermatophytes: Category of fungi causing infections of the hair, skin and nails.

DNA: Deoxyribonucleic acid; important nuclear material that carries genetic codes.

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

Genus: First Greek or Latin name given to a microorganism; always capitalized.

Gram Stain: Named for its inventor, Hans Christian Gram, and is therefore, always capitalized; most common stain used in microbiology to observe gross morphologic features of bacteria; a differential stain, allowing differentiation between Gram-negative and Gram-positive organism.

Holding Media: Specific media; used in the transport of microorganisms to support the life of the organism until they can be put on nutrient medium in the laboratory.

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

Inoculate: To place colonies of microorganisms onto nutrient media.

Lumbar Puncture: Surgical puncture of the lumbar area of the intervertebral spaces to aspirate cerebrospinal fluid for laboratory analysis.

Microbiology: Branch of biology dealing with the study of microscopic forms of life.

Mordant: Substance that causes dye to adhere to an object; iodine is a mordant in Gram stain.

Mycology: Study of fungi.

Nematode: Round worm.

Normal Flora: Microorganisms; normally present in a specific site.

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

Ova: Eggs, in this case, eggs of a parasite.

Parasitology: Study of organisms (parasites and their eggs) that live within or on another organism and at the expense of that organism.

Pathogen: Disease producing microorganism.

Petri Dish: Plastic dish into which agar is placed for the purpose of growing bacteria.

Potassium Hydroxide (KOH): 10% solution placed on vaginal smears, as well as skin scrapings, hair, and other dry substances, to dissolve excess debris. This clears the vision field for better viewing of fungi and spores.

Protozoa: One-celled animals divided into four groups; amoebae, flagellates, ciliates, and coccidia.

Quality Control: Measures used to monitor the processing of laboratory specimens; includes proper use, storage, handling, stability, expiration dates, and indications for measuring precision and accuracy of analytic processes.

Reagents: Chemical substance that detects or synthesizes other substances in a chemical reaction; used in laboratory analysis because it is known to react in a specific way.

Sensitivity: Test is which an organism is placed with antibiotics to determine which antibiotic will effectively kill the organism with the smallest dose (see also culture and sensitivity).

Species: Second Greek or Latin name given to microorganisms; the name is not capitalized.

Spores: An inactive state of some bacteria in which they are capsulated in protein. The encapsulation protects them from heat, chemicals, freezing, desiccation, and radiation. Spores can live for tens of thousands of years with no nutrient. When they are placed onto fertile soil (such as human tissue), they can become activated and grow. Tetanus is one type of bacteria that creates spores.

Stab Culture: Culture where the microorganism is stabbed for deep penetration into tubed solid media.

Taxonomy: Classification of organisms into appropriate categories.

Virology: Study of viruses.

Wet Mount: A method of adding liquid, usually saline or potassium hydrochloride, to a specimen on a slide for examination and preservation. The specimen is placed on a slide and one drop of saline (for diagnosis of trichomonas vaginalis) or potassium hydroxide (for diagnoses of vaginal yeast infection) is applied and mixes with the specimen. It is then covered with a coverslip and examined microscopically.

Wood’s Lamp: Special lights used to detect organisms that fluoresce such as certain fungi, bacteria, and parasites. Scabies and ringworm are two examples. Scratches in the eye may be detected using a Woods lamp after the eye has been stained with a fluorescent dye. Also used in determining margin dissection of melanoma.