CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Everyone has gotten ill at some time or the other in their life. The common cold, flu, cough, strep throat, and certain other diseases are commonplace and keep making a comeback over and over again. Our immune system is built for protecting us from these diseases and disorders and keeping us healthy. There are, however, certain diseases which can be easily spread from one person to another in a number of ways. These make us susceptible and vulnerable, and put our immunity at risk. Consider it your heartfelt duty not to expose our patients or classmates to what are known as contagious diseases.

In the following sections, we will provide you with a list of contagious diseases so that you can be on the lookout for the same and take precautions against them.

Contagious diseases can be spread in 3 ways.

- Direct physical contact with an infected person.
- Direct physical contact with objects and other surfaces that an infected person has touched.
- Coming in contact with airborne bacteria (through sneezing and coughing).

A General List

The following is a general list of contagious diseases. These may be transmitted via various modes. To minimize the risk of transmitting a contagious disease from a student to patients, visitors or employees, students with known, suspected or symptoms of contagious disease should seek appropriate medical attention from their Health Care Provider.

CONDITION	RESTRICTION	DURATION
Conjunctivitis	No Clinical/Classroom	24hr after Rx started
Diarrhea > 48hrs	No direct patient contact/food handling	Until resolved
Furunculosis/Boils/ Draining rashes/ Lesions / Fungal skin infections	No direct patient contact/food handling	Until no drainage
Hepatitis A	No direct patient contact/food handling	7 days after Jaundice onset or 2 weeks after symptom onset
Impetigo	No Clinical/Classroom	Lesions dry/crusted
Influenza	Handled on individual basis	
Measles (Rubeola)	No Clinical/ Classroom	Until 7 days after Rash appears
Mumps	No Clinical /classroom	Until 9 days after Parotitis onset
Rubella	No Clinical/ classroom	Until 5 days after Rash appears
TB, active	No Clinical/ classroom	48hr after antibiotic begun, sputum Bacilli free for 3 consecutive days
Strep Throat	No Clinical/Classroom	Until 24hr after Antibiotic begun
Shingles	May not care for high risk patients ie L&D, postpartum, newborns < 1, or Immuno-suppressed patients	Lesions dry/crusted
Varicella (Chickenpox)	No clinical/classroom	Lesions dry/crusted
Meningitis	Handled on an individual basis	
Pertussis	No Clinical/Classroom	7 days treatment of antimicrobial agent

Prevention and Treatment

With a comprehensive knowledge of the kind of diseases that feature in the list of contagious diseases, it is always helpful to know how to prevent the onset of these. The following are certain steps that you can undertake in this direction.

Getting vaccinated is one of the best ways in which the onset of these diseases can be prevented. With ongoing research and progress in the field of medicine, there are several vaccinations that have been invented which can prevent a wide range of diseases from affecting you. These vaccines are made available quite readily and one can thus take advantage of the same. These include - tetanus, hepatitis B, mumps, measles, rubella, etc.

Maintaining personal hygiene becomes the foremost important thing in preventing an infection. Washing your hands (and feet) with an antibacterial and antiseptic soap or liquid cleaner every time you enter a place from the outdoors is therefore important.

Covering your mouth every time you cough and sneeze so that the bacteria is not spread.

In case you know that a person is infected with a particular contagious ailment, avoid being in proximity of that person.

Do not share personal toiletries with people as a rule. Especially with those who are infected.

As far as the treatment for these conditions is concerned, technology has made great advances, and several of these contagious diseases can be treated with medication. Yet, it is always advisable to consult a specialist and start off with a proper treatment plan. Make sure to keep a copy of this list of contagious diseases handy, and try to prevent them rather than treat them.